The Shepherdess

The Rev. Dr. Clark E. Hobby

FAMILY
HISTORY
HOBBY
C13

7/2012

To Melanie
devoted servant of
our Lord and an important
staff member at St Mark's
Lutheran Church,
Clark E. Hobby
9/16/08

The Shepherdess

The Life Story
Of Betty Jean Keith Hobby

The Rev. Dr. Clark E. Hobby

FIRST EDITION
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Betty and Clark on their 45th wedding anniversay with their children, Janet, Ronald, Robert, and Linda.

Acknowledgements

My deep appreciation is expressed to all who touched the life of Betty and who enlarged life for her beginning with her children, daughters and sons-in-law, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Also, I'm thinking of her uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews, family members, and friends with whom she laughed and shared many wonderful experiences. You brought great joy to her life.

I want to acknowledge and express appreciation to the staff of *The Courier Times*, for permitting me to reprint an article which they published, related to the Stained-Glass Memorial Window which was installed at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, honoring the memory of Betty Jean Keith Hobby. The window was a gift from the Hobby family.

Thanks, too, to David B. Burns who photographed the memorial window and to Donna Cronk who wrote the article David's pictures and Donna's article appear in this book.

Thanks to Betsy Ahlersmeyer, a teacher of journalism, and Maybelle Grimm, a retired English teacher, whose suggestions I highly value. (This is the third book that I've been blessed to have Betsy critique.) Also, thanks to Judy

Godfrey, a retired art teacher, for her helpfulness related to picture selection and positioning.

I would be remiss if I were not to acknowledge the assistance of my grandson James, whose computer skills enabled me to have the material properly organized into chapters—a laborious but necessary task.

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About The Author

The Rev. Dr. Clark E. Hobby was fully orphaned by age six and spent eleven years in the home/school founded by the Chocolate King, Milton S. Hershey and his wife, Catherine. Clark was the 1972 Milton Hershey School Alumnus of the Year recipient. In 1986 the Alumni Association of Milton Hershey School presented him with the Alumni Service Award.

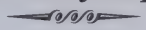
Clark served with the U.S.Air Force and held the rank of sergeant. In August of 1949 he married Betty Jean Keith, who passed away on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 25th) 2004. They were married for fifty-four and a half years. The Hobbys were blessed with two daughters and two sons, ten grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren, and two step-grandsons.

At age 26—married and the father of three—Clark began his studies for the ministry. He was ordained in 1963 into the Holy Office of Word and Sacrament by the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the Lutheran Church in America. For more than two decades Dr. Hobby has been a member of the Board of Directors of Wittenberg University. He was elected to emeritus status in 1989. The alumni association of Wittenberg honored him with membership in their association and the university conferred on Clark the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1999.

Upon retirement from full time ministry (2000) Dr. Hobby was given the title Pastor Emeritus. Two Indiana congregations that he served (New Castle and Auburn) have named their libraries in his honor. He has had a busy retirement. Three of his books are in print: *The Homeboy (2000), Seasons of Blessing (2004)* and, now, *The Shepherdess (2008).*

1.
The Prologue

A January Epistle



The Hobby Residence
4117 Jeffrey Lane
New Castle, Indiana

January 16, 2004

Grace be unto you and peace from
God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Throughout the Christmas Season, we thought about and thanked the Lord for you. As your cards, notes, and telephone calls arrived, we were deeply touched. Each day when the mail was delivered, I sat with Betty and read to her the messages that you sent. It became an important and anticipated daily ritual. We felt badly at the thought that our annual epistle would fail to reach you and, thus, was not a

small part of brightening your celebration of the Saviour's birth.

Actually, I am responsible for not getting our annual letter into the mail. Honestly, I started this letter but grasping the right words to send brought me to an abrupt and unfinished end.

We didn't do any shopping this year. We entrusted our children with the task of purchasing for us the gifts that we could give in the family exchange. As usual, our children went beyond what we thought that they should in gifting us. Let me share with you a unique and thrilling, unexpected gift that came from "outside." Our pastor invited me to participate with him in officiating at the Christmas Eve candlelight communion service. I was elated. However, on Christmas Eve morning, in talking with Pastor Gramza, I told him that it would be too painful for me to leave Betty on that special occasion. So I decided that she and I would be together on Christmas Eve. (I had made arrangements for someone to stay with her while I was at the candlelight service; those arrangements were cancelled.)

Now for the unexpected gift! We watched a couple of services on television. The late service—at 11 p.m.—was from a large Presbyterian Chruch in Salem, Oregon. As the service with carols and candles was approaching its conclusion, the organist played the introduction to "Joy To The World . . ."; the arrangement sounded familiar to me. It was beautiful! As the credits appeared on the screen, it brought great joy to me to see "Joy To The World, arranged by

Robert A. Hobby." What a gift that was for the two of us. It was an inspiring thought to think that our son's arrangement of that wonderful Christmas Carol was being heard on national television.

Since Christmas day, many folks have asked me the question, "Did you have a merry Christmas?" My response was, "Not a merry one but truly a blessed one." Our family was with us. The house was filled with the chatter and laughter of children and adults. There were twenty-six of us. We did have a wonderful Christmas even though Betty didn't feel up to dressing and was pretty much confined to her recliner. We realized, as we have so often, how richly the Lord has showered us with blessings. Before we all shared a delightful Christmas dinner, I read to the family the birth story of Jesus (Luke 2:1-20), a tradition established back when our children were very young. As we exchanged gifts, we were reminded of the greatest gift that has ever been given to humankind: the gift of a Savior, Christ the Lord.

Betty and I hope that your Christmas day was as special as the one that we experienced. I thought that since my Christmas letter was delayed, I would supplant it with an Epiphany letter; unfortunately, January 6th (Epiphany) has come and gone. At least I am writing this letter during the Epiphany season, and I am writing with the conviction that when you do receive it, you will know that you have been remembered and are genuinely precious to us.

Many of you may be unaware that after Betty's regimen of chemo was completed last spring, a follow-up

evaluation (CT-scan) revealed that the cancer had spread to her adrenal gland and was rapidly growing. Our oncologist referred us to the chief of urology at Indiana University Medical Center in Indianapolis. After consultation with him, surgery was scheduled in two parts: firstly, there was to be an exploratory procedure for the purpose of ruling out any additional tumors. Secondly, the malignant adrenal gland would be immediately removed.

Betty was in surgery about twenty to thirty minutes when the chief of gynecology at the medical center came to us in the waiting room. He indicated that the urologist would not proceed with the surgery because there were numerous tumors which were located in Betty's abdomen. They were not going to put her through the surgery, which apparently is difficult and painful, because of the location and function of the adrenal gland.

That evening we brought Betty home. After a time of healing from the exploratory part of the surgery, chemotherapy was resumed. The adrenal malignancy continued to enlarge and was causing severe pain for Betty. The decision was made to stop the chemo and use radiation on the adrenal gland. Five days a week for three weeks was arranged. As I write this letter, she has only one (the fifteenth) remaining radiation session. We are told that in about five weeks (time for healing) chemo will be resumed.

Throughout this daunting experience, Betty remains courageous and strong in her faith. We thank God for the excellent oncologist and the wonderful, compassionate nurses and medical technicians who share in her treatment

of this dreaded disease. Daily we thank the Lord for His presence and for the grace sufficient for Betty's every need. We thank Him that I am in a position to be her caregiver. You would be amazed how much I have learned over the past year and a half. I am doing things that, in the past, were always so expertly done by her.

Well, dear ones, I haven't much left to say regarding an update on Betty. Just know that she is persevering and that she has the best support system that anyone could hope for: faith, family, a fantastic medical staff, and friends who have stood steadfast with us. Our home has been kept in its usual clean, neat condition because of the "cleaning ladies," who come on occasion to check on me. Of course the cleaning ladies are our two precious daughters. Let me be quick to say, that while our sons have not been in a position to do housecleaning, they have been extremely supportive. Their frequent phone calls and—with their sisters—making certain that they were with us to meet the oncologist, at crucial points along the way, were tremendously helpful. Even our grandchildren have made frequent visits and phone calls to check on Grandma. One grandson called from Poland, while on a mission trip, to see how his grandma was doing. What greater blessings could one receive?

Update on the children:

Janet (husband James) enjoys her work as a school librarian and is enhancing her grandparenting skills.

Ronald (wife Renee) is regional sales manager for an imaging equipment (X-ray) company and doing very well.

Linda (husband Roger) is a full-time grandmother, loves it, and her home is filled with the activity of little grandchildren until midafternoon most days.

Robert (wife Jennifer) is Director of Music at Trinity English Lutheran, Ft. Wayne, where he has been since 1987. He continues composing and traveling extensively doing hymn festivals, teaching in music seminars, and doing recitals. He and Jenny are expecting our tenth grandchild and their third child.

In the event that you haven't heard, Evangel Press published my second book, *Seasons of Blessing*. In fact, I am including a copy of Evangel Press's announcement, which also includes on the back an order form. (This is included for information--not as a sales pitch). I am happy to say that the book has had a lot of excellent reviews; our grandson designed the cover and did all of the interior graphics. That makes the book even more special.

As the writer of Proverbs stated, ". . . no one knows what a day will bring forth." Moving into the weeks and months of the new year will take us down the path that we've never before traveled.

We cannot begin to predict what lies ahead for us. A wise person once said, "We do not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future." And with that confidence, we will, "Trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding . . ." (Proverbs 3:5).

In closing, let me assure you that your remembrances were greatly appreciated and brought a spiritual buoyancy to us throughout the holy and blessed seasons of Advent and Christmas. Thanks for sharing with us your 2003 joys and enriching experiences. We were delighted to hear from you.

I saved the best for last! It was providential for Betty and me that thirty years after I had the privilege of baptizing three grandchildren in the same service (1973), this privilege and honor was repeated in 2003 (September 28th) with me baptizing three great-grandchildren in the same service. Two were born exactly a week apart and the third a few weeks later. Now that's progress: getting three at a time! So, the Lord is faithful and continues to bless us.

May the New Year—2004—bring you good health and lots of happiness. Please continue to keep Betty in your prayers. We love you and wish it were possible to spend more time with you. You have enriched life for us and for that we give thanks and praise to God. Hopefully, in some way we will be able to keep in touch and keep you appraised of what we are experiencing. We rise each day with thanksgiving and end each day thanking the Lord for the gift of another day, confident that He has this whole world in His hands.

We send you our love and hugs,

Clark and Betty

Christmas 2004

Christmas Greetings
To the Church Family
From: Rev. Dr. Clark E. Hobby, Pastor Emeritus

This year I'll not be sending my usual Christmas Epistle, knowing that you will understand. But I do want to express profound gratitude for the unfailing love and generous spiritual and emotional support of the church family throughout the past year. Pastor Jeff has been extremely helpful to me and my family, and so have many of you. You are precious and, indeed, appreciated.

Christmas 2004 will be so "different" for us without Betty. Free from the pain and suffering of this world, let us listen for her voice as she sings with the heavenly chorus: *Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth.*

May the Holy Child of Bethlehem who brought love, hope, peace, and joy into our world be with you now to fill your heart and home with joy untold. With all Christendom, let us (figuratively) excitedly make our way to the manger bed in Bethlehem and there in worship, rededicate ourselves to Him who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Christmas blessings to you and yours!

Our Hearts Beat as One

To write about the one you love is, indeed, a mission impossible, because when you think you've accomplished the task, thoughts pass through your mind and you realize that there is so much more to write. Can one ever get to the point of saying, "I've covered everything"? My response to that question is, "Absolutely not!"

Life is beautiful in the living of it. It is even more beautiful to have someone with whom you can share not only the extraordinary experiences but also, and especially, the ordinary ones. Those unexpected stops to get an ice cream cone, those nights under the stars when walking hand-in-hand and sharing thoughts about the concluding day, the joy experienced when Dad and Mom proudly attended the children's Christmas program at church—such meaningful occasions are often eclipsed by the so-called, "bigger things" in life. Yet, they are the kinds of experiences that can be the glue that holds a marriage together and what ultimately will be looked back upon nostalgically and with appreciation.

My task in writing this book was made even more formidable because when my wife passed away, I lost my best friend. We often shared moments of laughter because

we could literally read each others' minds. To borrow a phrase from Shakespeare, "Our hearts beat as one."

Betty was not only my best friend, but others thought of her as a trusted friend also. Those who truly knew her found Betty to be genuinely honest; she had a sensitivity to the needs and feelings of other people. Never seeking the limelight for herself, she—by grace—let her light shine on behalf of others. No matter where we lived, people admired her industriousness, and they respected her compassionate response to those who were hurting.

Sally, a parishioner who knew Betty very well and who became like a member of the Hobby family, in her own words says:

> *"True friends are our greatest blessings. Betty was my greatest blessing. She was always there for me. On one occasion when pastor was out of town, Betty came to the hospital when I had surgery. She stayed with me and she prayed with me. Betty brought to me inspiration and needed encouragement."*

> *"Through the years, as good friends should and do, we laughed and cried together; we loved each other and respected one another. Betty was a wonderful lady whose attributes were loyalty, kindness, humbleness, generosity and understanding. She was always 'there' for everyone in good and bad times, never faltering in her faith."*

"Betty was a true Christian and my best friend, one who always put others first. I would like to pay tribute to this great lady. I will always miss her. Betty will live in my heart forever."

These sentiments were reiterated in messages and phone calls that came to our family subsequent to Betty's death on Ash Wednesday, 2004.

Hopefully, this book will enable family members to have a perpetual account of Betty's life and Christian witness. The younger members will remember how she delighted in having them in our home. Though she managed to keep busy, she was never too busy to offer a helping hand if a family member needed her.

In reading this book, members of the various parishes that we served and good friends whom we came to know in the communities where we lived will get to know Betty more intimately as they peruse this account of her life and Christian witness.

My only regret is that Betty didn't live to read her fascinating story—but, of course, she lived it and she knew it better than any of us. To Betty, whom I called Sweetie, this book is dedicated.

Betty's maternal grandparents, aunts, and uncles

2.
A Little History

Betty's Early Years

Back in the early part of the twentieth century, it wasn't unusual for a child to be born at home; in fact, most children were. The doctor was generally summoned when the patient entered her time of travail. During the era of the Great Depression, money was a rare commodity and families operated on scarcity. If one had a job, he was considered fortunate. Even those who were working received small pay checks. The luxury of a hospital birth was out of the question for the vast majority of people.

It is not surprising that Betty, born on February 5, 1928, was given a home birth. She was born at the home of her Uncle Ed and Aunt Laura. The Gutt residence was a farm home in East Bend Township, Champaign County, Illinois. Betty was the first child born to Ethel Rose (Sepp) and Robert Howard Keith. Her brother Dale Richard was born in January of 1930. Donald Eugene,

the youngest of the three children, was almost a Christmas gift—he entered this world December 22, 1935.

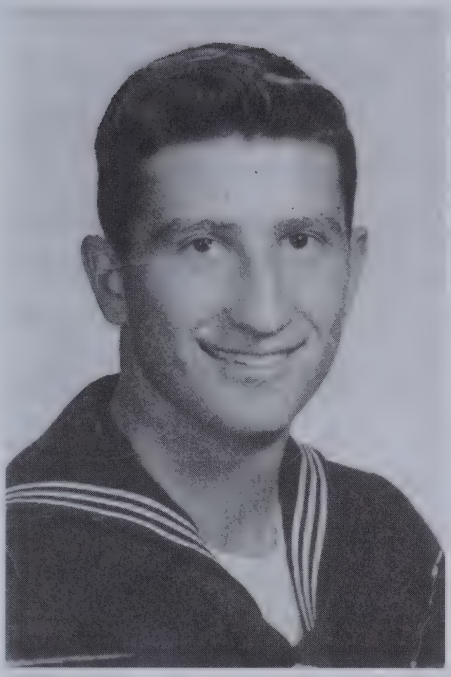
A Frightening Night in the Life of Bob, Ethel, and Daughter Betty

Something happened that was seared into the memory of Betty. One evening when she was a very young child, the family returned to their farm home to find it burning. Only one item of furniture was salvaged—Betty's small rocking chair. It still remains in the family and is emblematic of a frightening night in the life of Bob, Ethel, and daughter Betty. (Dale would have been too young to remember the event, and Don had not yet been born.) Through the years, this tragedy of a fire consuming all their household goods was alluded to on several occasions. Is it any wonder that Betty highly prized and carefully protected her little rocking chair?

Our children, and then later the grandchildren, were not permitted to use this chair as a play thing. The end result is that the chair, today, is in excellent condition, considering its age.

In elementary school, Betty attended a one-room schoolhouse. There were only between eighteen and twenty students enrolled in the whole school. It must have been a daunting task for the teacher to handle the students who ranged from first through fifth grades in that one room.

Betty had some interesting stories that came out of those years in the one-room schoolhouse. She would laugh as she told about the pony that she and her brothers intended to ride to school; however, more often than not, none would get much of a ride. The pony was very stubborn at times, and on some occasions the Keith kids were only able to lead the pony. They would tie it up in front of the schoolhouse and excitedly await the dismissal bell so that they could coax the pony to do a better job of providing one of them with transportation as they headed for home. How long this venture of "riding the pony to school" lasted is unknown to me, but the experiment was a better thought than it was a reality.



Brother Donald

Brother Dale

Family: Robert, Ethel, Donald, Betty, and Dale

Life on the Farm

Living on a farm and with limited transportation meant having to be creative when it came to play time. As I have already stated, most families in the 1930s were poor, and whatever toys children had were likely crafted by their parents. Playtime was a time to put the imagination to work. The Keith children did what most children did—they played games like hide-and-seek.

Mom Keith was a good and deeply religious person but, admittedly, when it came to her children she tended to be controlling. Betty found it much easier to go to her father when she had questions and concerns.

The family had little social activity. It was pretty much limited to church and square dancing on Saturday evening. This was a great way for the farm families to come together and to be kept abreast of village happenings. It was at square dances that relationships were strengthened, and it was a medium for providing support to one another as they dealt with health issues, crop failures, and other concerns. Is it surprising that there was a close bond within the farming community?

Betty's parents were share croppers. They rented the land and shared with the landlord both expenses and profits

related to planting and harvesting the crops. Typical farms in the thirties and forties consisted of a hundred and sixty acres.

Because of limited income from the farm, Bob Keith took outside employment in construction. He was a natural when it came to carpentry work. However, while the outside work brought in additional income, it also took him away from the farm—and more importantly from the family. Much of the time he was home only on weekends. He had a hired man who assumed a lot of the day-to-day farming responsibilities. Back then every farm had cattle and that meant daily chores. It should be noted that during the seasons of planting and harvesting, Bob's attention and energies were given exclusively to farming.

In sharing this facet of their family life, namely the absence of father from the family for economic reasons, Betty expressed that she believed it put a tremendous strain on her parents' marriage. The family needed more income and the only reasonable way to increase it was outside employment with its unfortunate ramifications. Both Bob and his wife Ethel were hard workers; during the busy seasons, it was work from sunrise to sunset. Every member of the family had chores to do. Women not only worked in the kitchen but many also helped their husbands out in the fields. Being gone from his family so much of the time must have been extremely painful for Bob Keith, a wonderful man about whom I will have more to share as the Shepherdess' story unfolds. Of Bob, one can accurately say that he was a hard worker, a devoted husband, and a loving father.

Back to Betty! As a youngster, she had her farm chores to do like other members of the family. Mostly, she did house chores and was very helpful with her younger brothers. Throughout her life, Betty and her brothers were quite close.

Dale began dating a girl by the name of Joyce, whom he knew from his high school days. Their relationship blossomed. After they married, they farmed for a number of years. Eventually, however, Dale gave up farming and moved his family into Fisher, Illinois, where he found employment.

Shortly after his graduation from high school, Donald enlisted in the United States Navy and served on an aircraft carrier. When he finished his tour of duty, he returned to the place where he had roots. He married Mary and, together, they began farming. By the time he passed away at age 54, they were farming over a thousand acres.

Betty had no sisters with whom she could play. To entertain herself, she found in the attic room a place of privacy and solace. There she spent hours with her cut-out paper dolls and relied upon her imagination. She developed a love for dolls, and after all of our children were emancipated, she rediscovered an interest in dolls and began a valued collection.

Betty's confirmation picture

Tennessee relatives

Valparaiso (Indiana) relatives

Clark with a couple of Betty's cousins

Exploring Town as a Teen

As a teenager, she enjoyed going to town with her friends. What did they do? Sometimes it would be bowling (at this she was good), and other times it would be a movie. She really enjoyed the movies of the forties and fifties—partly because of the music and partly because of the fascinating costuming. The movies provided one with an escape from reality—even though that escape may have only been for one to two hours. Another activity which the teenagers delighted in was going to The Elbow Room; this was an ice-cream parlor where the young people gathered. It was located on Sangamon Avenue in downtown Rantoul.

At this point in her life, Betty's best friends were Helen and Mary Fran—both of whom served as attendants at Betty's wedding and who remained lifelong friends. Growing up, Betty didn't have a lot of close friends, but she had friends to whom she felt a strong loyalty. I suspect limited time away from the farm and strong family ties contributed to this.

A favorite thing for friends to do was to visit a booth and have a picture taken. This was prior to the advent of affordable cameras. These booths were

installed in the dime store and at other locations such as the bus station, train station, and in the penny arcade at the amusement park.

Getting a picture in these booths was immediate and it was cheap. You closed the curtain, put your money into the slot, put on a happy face, and waited for the flash that was soon to come. In a couple of minutes, you had your small picture with a metal frame. No fuss, no muss, and no photographer with whom to contend. Betty had a special place in her photo albums for this kind of picture with her friends. Without realizing it at the time, this was a means of visually capturing and preserving precious memories.

The Keith children accompanied their parents to the occasional square dance on Saturday nights. The children frequently fell asleep on the benches and awoke the next morning in their own beds—not knowing how and when this happened. Soon, however, the children decided that they, too, could enjoy this form of dancing. It was fun and it was a way of socializing and passing the time.

The family rarely took what we would consider vacations. They did, however, visit family in Tennessee and Indiana. Because Betty would experience car sickness, her visits to see the Tennessee cousins were limited. However the Tennessee family members would make the trip up to Illinois to see their kin.

More often she visited with the Valparaiso, Indiana, cousins because the distance was much shorter. She loved her cousins on both sides of the family tree and highly valued the relationship with them. As she grew into adulthood,

travel became less and less an issue with Betty, although she never outgrew her phobia related to high hills and mountains.

In her junior year of high school, on weekends and in the summer season, Betty began working as a domestic. When someone in the "friendship circle" had surgery and was convalescing, or during harvest time, when wives had to work in the fields assisting their husbands and the need for baby-sitting services, housework, and so on became crucial, Betty was called upon to help. This was back in a time when young people didn't have work opportunities as they do today. (There were no fast-food restaurants, supermarkets, Wal-Marts, and the like, seeking part-time workers.) Jobs were few for the pre-high school graduates. So young girls would baby sit and/or do housework to earn spending money.

Betty was well liked by her peers. She was not highly opinionated, nor did she seek to be the center of attention when her circle of friends gathered. She had a wonderful outlook on life and possessed a balanced sense of humor. She could keep a secret—which, indeed, endeared her to her peers. Some of her high school extracurricular activities included the band and chorus. Betty was very active in her church's youth group. Additionally, she dedicatedly practiced her piano lessons and, as a consequence, became quite proficient at the keyboard. Suffice it to say, Betty's schedule was full but she managed everything well. In retrospect, Betty told me that her high school years were happy years.

Because of its small size, Fisher High School was involved in six-man football. This was a system that enabled the small schools to compete in interscholastic football.

In the autumn, Betty enjoyed going to the high school football games; in the winter you would find her at the basketball games. It would not be an exaggeration to characterize her as a real sports enthusiast. Her zeal for sports lasted throughout her lifetime. She always had a special place in her heart for the small Illinois village—that apart from the farm—she called home. It was the place where Betty attended high school—Fisher, Illinois, located in Champaign County.

Prom night ~ piano she valued

Betty, the teenager

Time Marches On

After graduating from high school, she took employment at the Rantoul Press, the town's newspaper and printing company. It was a change not only from high school to the work force, but she also moved from the farm to town. Since her grandparents lived in the village of Rantoul, she accepted their offer to stay with them through the week. After work on Friday, she returned home to spend the weekend with her family on the farm.

Working at the Rantoul Press was fine for a while, but she was a "people person." Upon hearing of an opening that existed at a local grocery store (the " Grab It Here!"), she applied for the position and was immediately hired. The grocery store's slogan was: "Where Ma Spends Pa's Dough." Because Betty was honest, dependable, and a hard worker, she was highly valued as an employee. This was her place of employment when I first met her and where she worked until our first child was born.

As she became an adult, Betty—like the husband she chose—left the farm but she never departed from those values which were instilled in her as a child growing up in rural America: love of God, love of family, and love of one's neighbors. They defined her value system, to which she

steadfastly clung throughout her life. Is it any wonder that near the end of her life, as she was succumbing to a dreaded disease, she asked the profound question, "What would one do without faith and family?"

The Keith family

Donald, Betty, and Dale

Betty celebrates a birthday. Mom and Dad were there.

3.
A Divine Encounter

How and When We Met

I first met Betty in church—the church in which we were eventually married. Through the years, I've enjoyed telling the story of our first meeting. (I prefer to think of it as a divine encounter.) It is important for me to include in this book the details of our first meeting because, in the retelling of it, I will never forget it and it is a meeting that seems to have had heaven's endorsement.

The horns had just quit blowing and the drum beats were now silent. Still fresh in the minds and the intentions of many people were the soon-to-be broken resolutions made as part of the ritual of ushering in a New Year (1949). One day in early January, an Air Force colleague of mine extended to me an invitation to do him a favor—critique the choir of which he was director. Flattered to be asked, I responded in the affirmative. Frankly, at that point in my life, I lacked the necessary credentials necessary to offer a fair and legitimate critique.

With that said, I did possess a wealth of exposure to music. All through my growing up years in an orphanage, I sang in a number of choral groups, beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school. In senior high school (an all boys' school), I sang in the Glee Club. (It was a quality organization. In state forensic competition we won the state championship during my senior year).

My friend Marlow knew I played the organ and, in my history, I had extensive exposure to choral music, so he thought that I could be helpful to him by observing and listening to his choir. He also wanted me to observe him as a director. He was wanting to improve his directing skills so I consented to evaluate him. He expected me to be honest with him.

So, while my formal music training was deficient, my life's experience of singing in the choir, glee club, and the high school octet provided me with a fairly good background to undertake the task of critiquing my friend and his church choir. (Seriously, I don't think he was as deeply interested in a critique as much as he was in having someone to hang out with after the rehearsal ended. I owned an automobile and he didn't.)

Betty's senior picture

A Young Maiden Falls . . . For Me

That evening, at the church, Marlow and I sat in the front pew making small talk, watching the choir members arrive. When it appeared that all of the choir members were present, I questioned my friend, "Marlow, why don't you get this rehearsal in gear?"

His response to me was, "The organist hasn't yet arrived."

Just moments later the choir loft door opened. Into the chancel of the church emerged this young maiden, whose arms were cradling books. As she descended the steps of the choir loft in the direction of the organ console, she lost her balance and was heading for a fall. Being young and agile, I sprang into action and with open arms caught her. With a sigh of relief, knowing that I had been helpful, I looked heavenward and muttered, "A sign from heaven!" So I married her.

While I must confess that not every detail in that story is factual, much of it happened as I described it. So, an evening encounter at the American Lutheran Church on Bell Street, in Rantoul, Illinois, was where and how I met the young lady who became my wife, the devoted mother of our children who evolved into a beloved grandmother, great-grandmother, and shepherdess.

As I put these words on paper, it has occurred to me that our first meeting at the church took place prior to, but very near, the opening of the Lenten Season which begins on Ash Wednesday. It was on Ash Wednesday, fifty-five years later, that Betty Jean Keith Hobby was called from the church militant on earth to the church triumphant in heaven.

Betty's senior picture

Be Kind and Gentle . . .

The Holy Scriptures instruct us to be kind and gentle with others, because we may unknowingly be entertaining angels. In reflection, I am convinced that for 54½ years, I had the distinct privilege of sharing life with an angel. It would be untruthful of me to give the impression that our relationship was without an occasional pot hole on the avenue of matrimony. Indeed, it is wonderful to dream of a "super highway" marriage devoid of any rough spots along the way, but that is an impossible dream—we live in a world of reality! Looking in the rearview mirror of our life together, Betty and I agreed that the rough spots may very well have been bonding agents.

Most people who have been blessed with many years of marriage will be quick to tell you that when dealt with in a loving and mature manner, the tough times become the glue that holds a marriage together. So, you with the stars in your eyes, focus on the one to whom you've made a commitment; learn the lesson of prayer, develop a keen channel of communication, and you will have learned some secrets for a happy, exciting, and enduring marriage.

When we were first married, I told Betty that we could not have a perfect marriage because she chose me as

her husband. While we were unable to experience perfection in our relationship, I can assure you that ours was a marriage in which each respected the other and in which love was capable of conquering any and all flaws. It was our intention that differences over issues would not get in the way of the love which we had for one another.

To make the claim that we never disagreed would be to paint a false picture of our life together. However, we shared 54½ years as husband and wife, and through those years our love grew and matured. Never was there a time that either of us lacked trust in each other; never did we betray the commitment that we made to be faithful to each other.

Cpl. Hobby meets Betty.

Sgt. Hobby writing a note to his bride

In a Chicago Restaurant . . .

The evening of our first meeting, Betty suggested to me that I accompany her and three others to a concert which was to be given at the Flatville Lutheran Church by the Wartburg Seminary Choir. The concert was scheduled for that very weekend. I had no plans so my response was in the affirmative. At this point in time, I cannot recall with whom I shared the back seat. Betty was up front with her date for the evening. (It was a double-date situation, but the wrong couples were dating.)

When opportunity permitted, I asked her how serious she was about the other guy. Fortunately for me, he was not technically her boyfriend, so she was free to respond to my date invitation. From that day onward, we talked to each other daily, either in person or on the phone.

Within a month and a half of our first date (six weeks!), we were sitting in a Chicago restaurant eating spaghetti. The order had been taken by the waitress, and while Betty and I were waiting on the food to arrive, I removed from my pocket a small diamond ring; it was at that moment and in that context that I proposed to Betty. "Will you marry me?" I asked.

Without hesitation she responded, "Yes!"

When the food arrived, I must confess that our interest in eating was gone. The drive back to Rantoul was full of excitement (Chicago is about two hours north).

I Left Reluctantly . . .

Eventually, we were sitting in the driveway of the Keith farm. Betty asked that I not go in with her because she wanted to break the news without me being present. So we said good-bye and she agreed to call me later that evening. I left reluctantly because I knew that Mom Keith was strong willed and would not do well in accepting the news.

It was at the evening meal that Betty made her announcement: "I've accepted Clark's proposal for marriage."

"You are both too young! You don't know what love is all about," her mother declared. (I must confess that regardless of our ages, seen through the prism of this mother's love, we would never have been old enough.) Age was not the issue. Her mother could not bear the thought of her only daughter leaving the nest. All of us have our hang-ups and one of Mom Keith's was the inability to let go of her children. Since Betty was the eldest of the three, I had to pave the way for two daughters-in-law. Truthfully, I was very young and I must admit that at the tender age of nineteen years, I was not yet ready to take on the responsibilities that are attached to a marriage commitment.

In fairness to Betty's mother, I must admit that she didn't know much about my background (only that I was an orphan and was raised in an orphanage), and I was in the Air Force without any guarantees as to where and when I might be transferred. From a parent's perspective, I can understand her apprehension. But she made it very difficult for Betty and me. She eventually embraced the fact that we were determined to get married and she was not going to be successful in changing our minds.

With the guidance and help of the Almighty and because of Betty's maturity and unselfishness, we quickly came to grips with the reality of living in a committed relationship based on faith and love.

Because of what we experienced with Mom Keith in those months prior to our marriage—and she didn't give in to the idea without a valiant struggle—as a pastor in the church, I've often challenged couples to be sensitive in their role as parents. It is the will of God that parents provide their children with roots and then permit them to grow wings with which to fly from the nest. One of the blessings of parenthood is to arrive at that point in life when couples see their children ready to stand on their own two feet. Betty and I made certain that our children knew, without a doubt, that if ever they needed us, we would be there for them. Though at times we may have failed, we sincerely worked at avoiding interfering in their marriages.

A walk in the park

On a double date with Bud and Helen

Betty's engagement picture

4.
". . . You Surpass Them All"

(Prov. 31:29)

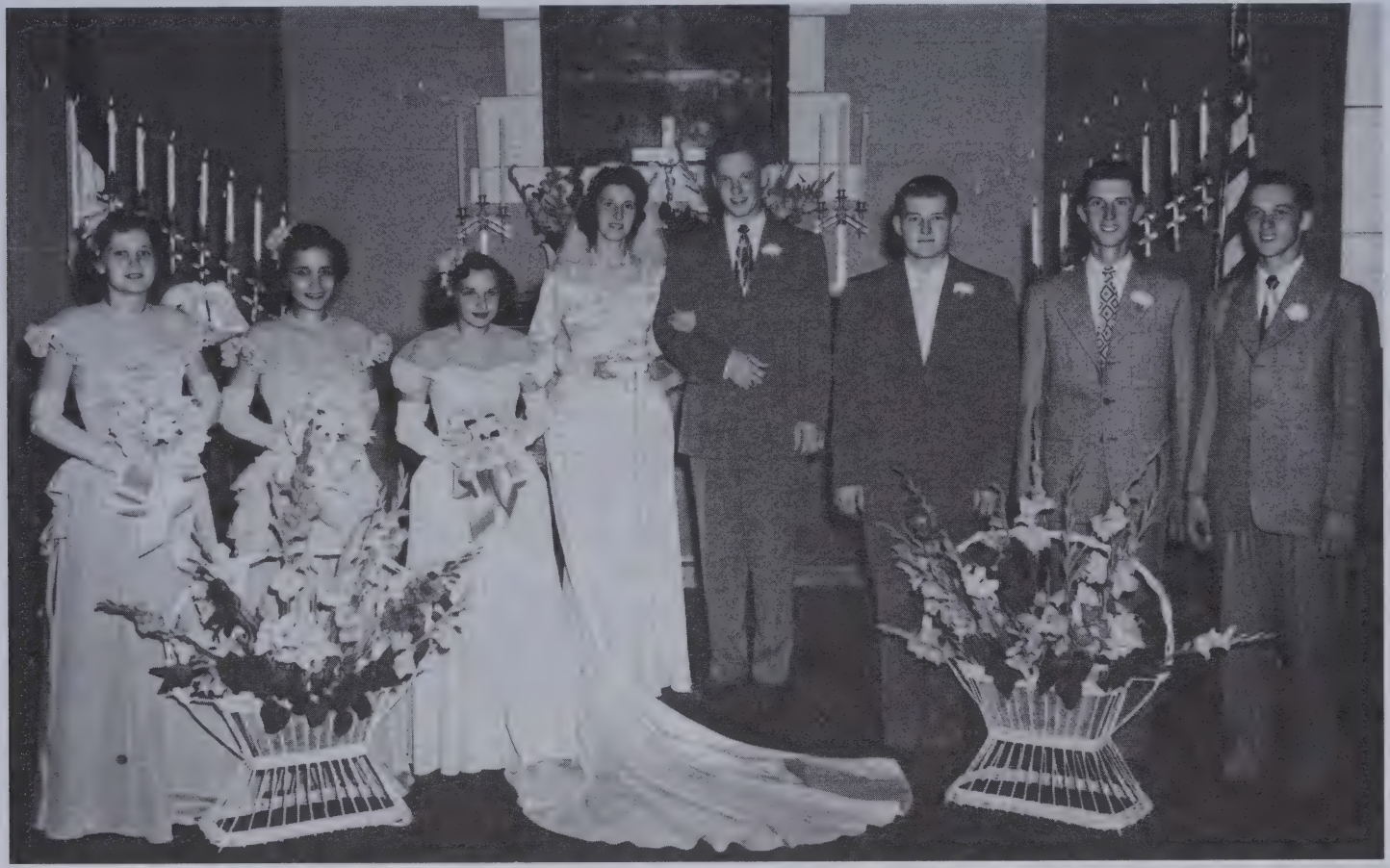
Here Comes the Bride

On August 6, 1949, at the American Lutheran Church in Rantoul, Illinois, Betty and I exchanged our wedding vows. Captain Francis A. Hanks, Chaplain, USAF, (I was his assistant) and the Reverend Elmer A. Nelson (pastor of the church) presided. The vocalist, Chester Zehr, was well-known to Betty and her family. During the prelude he sang "I Love You Truly" and " Because." As we knelt at the altar, he sang "The Lord's Prayer."

Betty was the church's organist, so it became necessary to arrange for a substitute. Sergeant Marlow Rohman, a colleague of mine at Chanute Air Force Base, was our choice. It was he who had invited me to critique his skills as a choral director and which opened the door for me to meet Betty. Because of that, it seemed appropriate for us to request his services. Marlow did a fine job.

The wedding was lovely. Betty entered the church on her father's arm as Marlow played the processional; she

August 6, 1949



Our wedding party

looked radiant. The Lutheran Church on Belle Street had about two hundred invited guests who were seated and ready to celebrate with us. One of Betty's cousins Wanda was the maid of honor and her other attendants (as I've earlier mentioned) were Betty's close friends—Helen and Mary Fran. Another friend Dorothy helped serve at the reception. My attendants included a friend, Bud Schlueter, my younger brother Albert, and my brother-in-law Dale.

The baskets of flowers which adorned the chancel of the church were out of the garden of Betty's Aunt Ferne, who also arranged them in the baskets. Our wedding photos were taken by, and were a gift to us from, Pastor E. A. Nelson.

The reception was held in the church's basement. Modestly, we served our guests wedding cake, punch, coffee, nuts, and mints. We couldn't afford a reception hall, a catered dinner, or anything like that, but as it turned out the wedding and reception met all of our desires. We could not have been happier the way everything worked out. Much thought and time had gone into the preparations. Betty handled all of the reception arrangements and, in the end, she deserved an A+ for her efforts.

Our First and Only Apartment

After our marriage in August of 1949, I continued to serve with the U.S. Air Force. Our first apartment was in "Miller's Addition," on the east end of Rantoul, Illinois. The apartments were duplexes carved out of World War II barracks—associated with Chanute Air Force Base. Since they were no longer needed by the military, they were sold and became civilian housing.

One of the benefits of this apartment was its proximity to the air base, and the location was also convenient for Betty who continued to work at the grocery store as a cashier. At some point, she changed her place of employment. When we became engaged in February, she was with the "Grab-It-Here" store, but by August when we were married, she was an employee of Zander's Food Market. The owners were members of our church so they knew Betty and her family. They delighted in having her as an employee.

Betty was quick with numbers and, prior to computers, this was a tremendous asset for a cashier to possess. Beyond that, she had a winsome personality and was well-liked by the customers. The Zanders knew that she embraced lofty values. Betty was trustworthy and she was a hard worker when

it came to stocking shelves and such. She worked at Zanders until the birth of our first child Janet.

The modest apartment in which we lived consisted of a living room, small kitchen, bedroom, and bath. It met our needs. But then one day, we learned that child number two was on the way. Our first and only apartment was quite small, and it was heated with an oil burner which, during the heating season, was located in the living room. During the months when heat was not needed, the freestanding oil burner was physically removed from the apartment and stored in the owner's basement (he lived across the driveway.) Realizing that we would need more space with an addition to the family, we began a search.

One day Betty told me that she had heard of a small house with two bedrooms, kitchen, living room, and bath that would be for rent over on Penfield Street. By this time I had been discharged from the Air Force and was working with the Railway Express Agency. The house on Penfield Street was a stone's throw from Rantoul's Illinois Central Railroad station. This meant that I could walk to work.

The Penfield house was not without its deficiencies. Betty had to keep her washing machine on the back porch. When doing laundry, we had to wheel this machine into the kitchen. Among its assets was a large back yard. The first summer that we lived in this house, Betty tried her hand at raising a garden, the produce from which she canned. Personally, I thought that the weeding chores and the work involved with canning (beets, beans, tomatoes) were not

worth the effort. Betty enjoyed the opportunity to be outside doing what she had been accustomed to doing, growing up as a farm girl. During the time that we lived in this Penfield Street house, our son Ronald was born.

As already mentioned, living on Penfield Street put me in great proximity to my work with the Railway Express Agency. With a growing family, the need for more family income was a perpetual concern. After Janet was born I became the organist at church. The salary for the organist was $12.50 per month which hardly covered the costs of gasoline and organ music. So I took on a part-time job as custodian at the lumber yard that was within walking distance. This extra income helped us with our groceries, doctor bills, utilities, and so on.

Betty and I were concerned about the time that extra work took from the family, so we immediately began thinking in terms of quality time versus quantity time. When Ron was about eighteen months old, Betty shared with me her worry regarding the heating situation in the house on Penfield Street. It was equipped with a floor furnace and situated near the one living room wall. Our son was walking but he was not yet steady on his feet, and Betty feared that he would fall on the grillwork of the floor furnace and be badly burned. This was not only a good point, it was an essential concern. She expressed fear that Janet might trip and fall on the grillwork as well. So once again the search for a house to rent ensued.

Back in the forties and fifties, the purchasing of a house by young people who were lacking in resources was,

Betty, Clark, and Janet

indeed, very difficult. At the time, renting seemed to be the only option for Betty and me.

As luck would have it (I think providence would be a better way to describe it), we heard about a spacious bungalow that was going to be for rent. It was empty at the time, so if the owner gave us the word, we would have immediate possession—that was truly exciting news and we were hopeful. The house was just about five or six blocks from my work. It was on Champaign Avenue.

This house had a basement and a "real" furnace. It had a formal dining room and a spacious living room, a well-equipped kitchen, and two large bedrooms plus the bath. We would have lots of room and it had a fenced-in backyard. However, the owner (who farmed west of Rantoul) inherited the property and wasn't in need of income from it—nor was he going to be pressed into a quick decision as to whether or not he would rent it. Hoping and praying, we impatiently waited for his decision. One day, when we least expected it, he called and said that he would rent it to us. This was an answer to prayer! Now Betty could do her washing in the basement, and now the children would have plenty of play space inside and out. Did I mention that Betty was expecting again? The baby Linda arrived several months after we moved into the larger, much nicer home.

Late in her pregnancy, Betty was going to the basement when she slipped and fell down the last few steps. Fortunately, she suffered only some bruises, but the fall resulted in the umbilical cord being wrapped around Linda's neck. It was by the grace of God that both the

mother and unborn child were saved from serious injury. Linda was delivered in fine shape; a healthy baby. Betty was mother to three children within four years. She was the consummate mother. She devoted herself to the task of bringing up our children "in the way that they should go . . ." (Proverbs 22:6).

As our family grew, our financial need increased. Betty was a superb manager of the household but reality set in. Living costs for the five of us required that I seek a part-time job which paid substantially more than what the lumber yard part-time job was paying me.

One day as I delivered some packages (Railway Express) to Eddy's Men's Store, the owner told me that he was looking for help. (I believed this was manna from heaven.) I engaged the owner in a discussion and asked about part-time work. On the spot I was given an offer that sent me home whistling. The new job would take me from my family, but I didn't see any other solution to our financial needs. I knew that Betty had plenty to worry about without adding bill collectors to the list. Betty knew that all this work was hard on me, but she never complained so why should I?

As time passed, I was offered a full-time position at the men's store with a salary plus commission arrangement. It was a good match. I enjoyed sales with its challenges. I had great respect for the owner and his brother, the manager. I would go to work at noon one day and close up the business; the next day I would go in at 8 a.m. and was off at 5 p.m.

A Home Purchased

While the Hobby family enjoyed their home, it was a rental, and the owner made it clear that he had no interest in selling the property. (Perhaps he entertained thoughts of one day moving into it upon retirement from the farm.) Having the itch to be home owners, Betty and I were constantly on the lookout. In the nineteen-fifties, it was not easy to secure a mortgage for the purchase of a home. The bank was, literally, a place where you would go to borrow money if you could prove that you didn't need it.

The age of prefabricated (factory-built) houses was in its infancy in the late forties and fifties. The National Home made its debut and made its mark on the nation's housing industry. Large tracts of land were under development around the country, but even with prefabricated housing, financing was not easily arranged for lower-income people and first-time home buyers.

A couple of years after renting the bungalow in Rantoul, we were enjoying a ride through the village of Fisher where Betty had attended and graduated from high school. On the outskirts, we noticed a new ranch-style house that was under construction. We stopped and asked the builder some questions. After an inspection of the house

and property, we assumed that it was beyond our ability to arrange the necessary financing. However, the builder indicated that he would be able to work with us in arranging for the mortgage.

A week later we signed the contract to purchase our first home. The conversation ended leaving us convinced that by God's grace and with His help, we could purchase that house. We wanted to do it all on our own, without input or assistance from Betty's folks. We wanted them to know that we could stand on our own. When the deal was sealed, we'd surprise them. It worked out the way that we had hoped it would.

The house had three bedrooms, a large living room, an attractive kitchen with space at one end for a table and chairs, a utility room, and a bath. It was situated on a corner lot. We had a great feeling! We were able to accomplish this without family assistance.

Betty was ecstatic the day we moved into our first home. She chose fabric for the dining-area windows. One of her aunts offered to make the draperies, which she did and they were really special. The finished product enhanced and made for a more formal atmosphere for the dining area.

Because of cost, we resorted to ready-made curtains for the other windows. It was an exciting chapter in this young wife's life (her husband's as well). She worked hard and deserved everything that she received. She was proud of her utility room which housed the furnace, hot water heater, and an automatic washer and dryer.

The Explorers

Caring for her babies and housekeeping consumed her days and at times provided her with a challenge. For example, one day when the two older children (Jan and Ron) were outside playing in the yard, they decided to visit a friend who lived on the west end of the village. Hand in hand, they crossed streets and made their way to the home of this family friend. Betty was busy taking care of Linda and eventually looked out to see what the two older ones were doing but couldn't find them. She was frantic. She quickly checked with the neighbors but was unable to track the children down; she was on the verge of tears. Suddenly, the phone rang and our "west-end" friend informed Betty that two little visitors showed up at her door. Most of us would agree that having visitors can be a delightful event but, in this situation, there was concern that these little "travelers from afar" were on an expedition without either the knowledge or approval of their mother.

Needless to say, Betty was greatly relieved to know that her little explorers were safe and in the hands of a trusted friend. Betty gave precise instructions to keep the children there because mother was on her way to lead her wayfaring

children home. That was the last time that they ventured off on their own.

Over most of her life, Betty was rarely ill. However, while we lived in the village of Fisher, she came down with what the doctor diagnosed as scarlatina (a mild form of scarlet fever), a rare disease. This was one time that we were required to call upon Grandmother Keith for help, and she quickly and graciously responded. With three little children, each being a little more than a year apart, Betty had her hands full. I never heard her complain. She did an excellent job of meeting the needs of our children. She seemed to always know just what to do regardless of the situation.

Ronald and Janet

Betty and her girls

Janet, Linda, and Ronald

Ronald, Linda, and Janet

5.
A Special Calling

A Pivotal Point in Our Lives

One evening in the spring of 1956, after closing the men's store in Rantoul, I drove home eager to share with Betty a decision that I had made. I was prudent enough to know that fulfilling the call, that I knew in my heart of hearts was from God, hinged upon Betty's support and encouragement. In this regard she did not disappoint me; in fact, she couldn't have handled the challenge in a more positive way.

By the time I arrived home, Betty had finished giving the children their baths, prayed with them, and tucked them in for the night. In the living room, I asked my beloved Betty to sit next to me on the couch. It was then that I shared with her the struggle that I had been undergoing for at least two years. Quietly she listened to every word that I spoke. As I set before her my decision to study for the ministry, you can imagine her shock.

At first Betty was very quiet, and I was hoping for some kind of outburst. I knew better than to think that she would jump up and down for joy—what I presented to her was, from our perspective, a mission impossible. On the other hand, I was talking intimately to a woman of faith who believed with me that, "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

I had often heard the expression, "The silence is deafening." At that moment I would have given anything to hear my dear wife say something. She was silent.

Betty could have but didn't question my ability to meet the requirements of four years of college and four years of seminary. She could have complained that financially there was no way under heaven that we could cover the costs related to meeting the requirements of ordination. Our existing expenses kept our noses to the proverbial grindstone. But she knew and I knew that, "We walk by faith not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7 KJV).

On my drive home that evening, I had thought about all that would be required of me to prepare for the ministry, but I was also thinking of Betty and the many hardships she would have to face. It would mean giving up a new home of which she was enormously proud. It would require selling our two-year-old automobile. (Back in those days a family was really fortunate to own a car—and if you had one that was relatively new you were especially fortunate.) God alone knew the many other sacrifices that she would be called upon to make. Betty cried most of the night. Neither she nor I knew what lay ahead for us and for our family.

A Faith Response

The next morning, Betty's question to me was, "Well, what must we do to begin the process?"

Reflecting back upon that night, I wonder if Betty had experienced a theophany, because not too many women would be so willing to respond so quickly to such a formidable challenge. One of her concerns was, "What must I do to be a pastor's wife?" When she and I first met (in church) I truly admired her deep commitment to the Lord and His church. When I revealed to her that I knew the Lord was calling me into the ministry and that I strongly believed that happiness would come to us only if we, in faith, responded to His leading, she never questioned my sincerity. Tenderly, she asked me, "Am I good enough to be a pastor's wife?" If only, in that moment, she could have known, that in the years ahead many would say of her, "She is the 'perfect' pastor's wife."

By this time, Betty and I had been married for seven years, and we were the parents of three small children. We had gotten married young and, frankly, we had no nest egg upon which to draw while meeting the many financial challenges which awaited us. As a family, we would face long-term educational expenses just for me to satisfy the

requirements of ordination. It took deep faith in God, courage, and an unwavering loyalty to her husband for Betty to agree to support me in preparing for the pastoral ministry.

Being the person she was, after spending a night in tears (and I am sure in prayer), she asked: "Well, what do we need to do to forge ahead, responding to God's call?" (Betty and I were well acquainted with the Old Testament prophet Jonah.)

Personally, I have always believed that Betty had received a call from God in the same way that I had. Otherwise, I doubt that we could have survived the sacrifices we had to make and the hardships that we endured during those early years of preparing for my ordination. We were both called but to different areas of service. I was called to the office of Word and Sacrament; she was extended a call to be a devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and lover of people: *She was called to be a Shepherdess!*

Without Betty by my side, I know without a doubt, that I would not have been able to fulfill God's call. She was there by my side in the good times and those discouraging times when I felt tempted to throw in the towel.

Through years of rearing children and my years of academic and professional preparation for the pastoral ministry (remember her role in all of this ran concurrently), Betty and I learned a vital lesson regarding God's providence. The Lord never promised it would be easy. However, of this we were certain, when God calls us to a

task, He will provide our needs. Conversely, we must remain faithful and put our deepest trust in Him.

Through those challenging eight years, we faced many closed doors. But when we approached them, in some providential way those closed doors were opened. Each day we lived the words of Psalm 119:105: "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (NIV). I am not being melodramatic when I say that there were times when we prayed and wept, but there were also times when we prayed and, in ecstasy, stood on the mountaintop. At all times God was faithful; His blessings came to us in ways that we could not have imagined. Through those times of struggle and times of exultation, we knew in our hearts that we served a God of amazing grace, and it was very clear to me that I was married to a woman who, like myself, lived with a sense of God's special call. Her life was defined in terms of faith and family. From her I drew strength and from her I derived inspiration.

In 1993 when I received a call to return to a former parish that we had served in New Castle, Indiana, it was for both of us a time to look to the Lord for guidance. I had been at St. Mark's in Auburn, Indiana, for ten years and had assumed that I would remain there until my time of retirement. After prayer and reflection, we felt that it was indeed the will of the Lord that we should return to a parish that we had served for seven years. As I prepared to announce to the congregation that I would be resigning and leaving them to return to New Castle, a reporter for the local newspaper called, requesting a news release through that medium. I

consented. The newspaper article said, "He credits his wife, Betty, for all he has achieved in his work." In the context of the newspaper article, I was quoted as saying:

> "'Without her I could not have accomplished what we have (accomplished), both in terms of preparing for ministry and during my years of ministry,' he said warmly. 'She definitely has been an inspiration and a tremendous asset for me and my ministry.'"

Betty the Young, Happy Mother

When we lived in the first home that we bought—there in the small village of Fisher, Illinois—we had neighbors across the street to whom we felt a kinship. Wayne Roth was a Captain in the Air Force and I was recently discharged from the Air Force. He and his wife Connie had small children just a bit older than the Hobby kids. We attended the same church in Rantoul. When Wayne was at the Air Base and I was at my place of employment, Connie and Betty spent a lot of time together; the Roth kids and the Hobby kids were playmates.

Four years before she passed away, Betty had this intense desire to contact the Roth family whom we had not heard from for many, many years. She persevered and was successful in making contact with them. We received a delightful update on their family and learned that, after his retirement from the Air Force, Wayne and his family moved back to California where they had their roots.

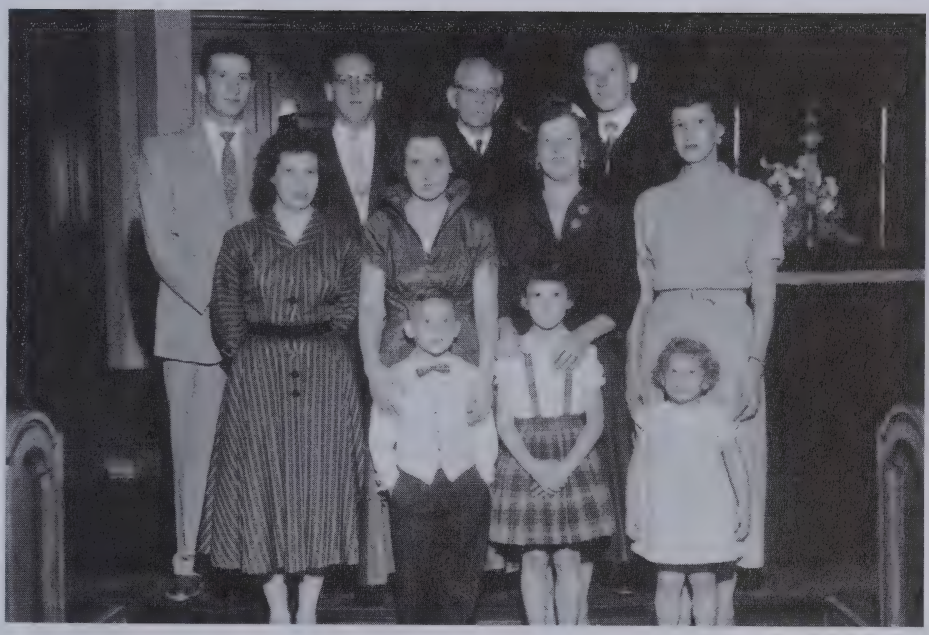
After Betty's death, I informed Wayne and Connie of our loss; in responding and sending us condolences, Connie stated that a year prior to Betty's death, Wayne had died. In that moment, I remembered the words of the hymnist: "Time, like an ever-rolling stream soon bears us all away."

In her last letter to me, Connie wrote:

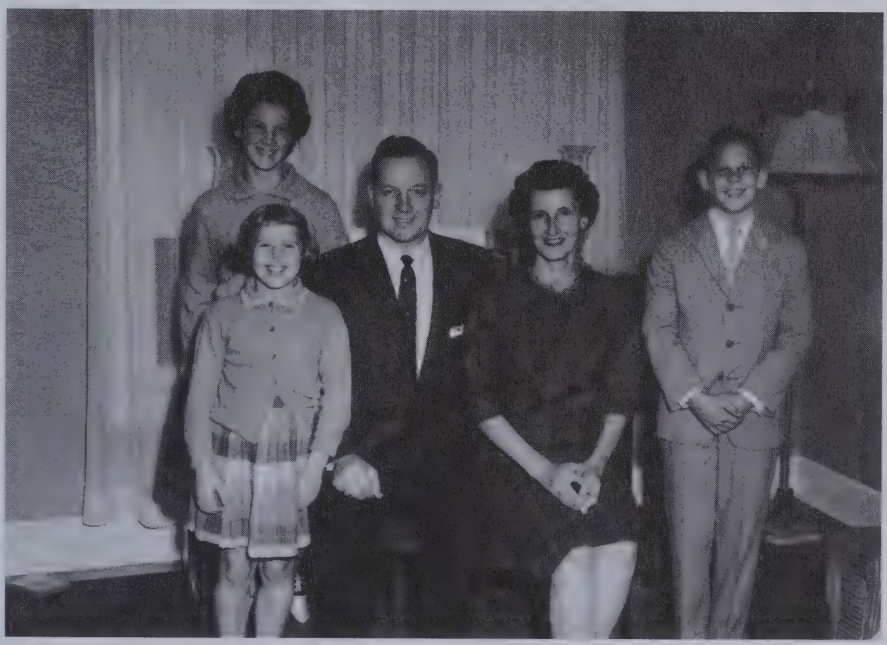
"The memories of you and Betty across the street in Fisher—they are precious memories. Betty the young, happy mother. The three beautiful children Jan (I believe) dark hair, your handsome son and that blond beauty, the baby girl. The times Betty and I took the children to her parents' farm. Those months are filled with memories and Betty and the children are in most of them. Your letter was especially meaningful to me at this time . . ."

Connie went on to reveal the details of her husband's death. But what I find especially striking is that after the passing of fifty years Connie fondly remembered Betty as a happy, devoted mother. Betty made a deep and lasting impression on people; I continue to receive correspondence from friends—of those years down memory lane—who remember Betty's qualities of faith, loyalty, happiness, devotion, humor, generosity, and thoughtfulness.

Showing off our baby



Family members—the day Clark was licensed to preach



Pre-Christmas photo 1961

Before we moved to Indiana

6.
A Shepherd's Heart

A Memorable Event

On the occasion of celebrating Clark's thirtieth anniversary of ordination, the congregation of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in New Castle, Indiana, went all out in making it a memorable event. After the worship service, a dinner was held in Luther Hall with many invited guests; in fact, representatives from each of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod congregations that we had been privileged to serve were in attendance. Additionally, close friends and colleagues were invited to participate in this gala event.

The entire Hobby family was there, with the exception of our younger son who that very day was conducting in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, a premiere performance of a musical piece that Bob was commissioned to write. In a note that he had written and which was read after the dinner, he stated, ". . . While it is a true honor to stand in front of 200 talented children (The Ft. Wayne Children's Choir), it would have been a greater joy to have been present in New Castle."

He went on to write, "A point that no one should overlook today is that we are actually celebrating 60 years of ministry—30 from Clark and 30 *from Betty*. How many pastor's spouses can you think of who would make hospital calls when the pastor is away? Or who would baby-sit children weekly so that young parents could be a part of the choir? Or who would provide a weekly ride for parishioners to church? Mom's actions through the years have often been behind the scenes and sometimes understated but, in my opinion, they have always exemplified the heart of the Gospel."

What a beautiful summation and characterization of a person who possessed the heart of a shepherd. Quietly, but lovingly, she would offer her time and energy to assist those who had to rely on the generosity of others.

Letting Her Light Shine

In one parish, she provided transportation for a widow who was legally blind, thus enabling her to attend worship services. It became a ministry for Betty. Whether it was Sunday morning or an evening service during Advent and Lent, Betty was on call to make certain that transportation to the church was available to the elderly: some lived at home, others resided in a nursing home.

In her earlier years, Betty was a member of the church choir. She had a lovely alto voice, and she sang with the adult choir in the various churches that I was called to serve. In her later years, she eventually decided that she would be more valuable to the choir by baby-sitting the children of younger couples. The evening of choir rehearsal, she would go to the couple's home, precluding the necessity of taking the children out on a cold winter's night. At worship she would sit in the pew with the children. One mother commented, "I wish they (the children) would sit that quietly for me."

When I was out of town and there happened to be an emergency in the parish, of her own volition, she would be there to do what she could—whether it was to offer a prayer, make some phone calls or just sit awhile. There

were occasions when she went to be with a parishioner at the hospital. If the situation called for surgery, she would sit with the family as they kept the vigil.

One church, that we previously served, published a history of the congregation's life and in speaking of my ministry to that parish there appears this reference to Betty. "While serving as Pastor, his wife, Betty was active in the congregation, serving as pianist for the Junior Choir and working in all the women's activities."

In each State of the Church report that I submitted at the annual meetings of the congregation, an acknowledgement appeared expressing appreciation for Betty's gracious and behind-the-scenes contribution. For example, the report for 1992 includes this statement:

"Finally, thanks to Betty (Hobby) for all that she does to assist me in my ministry. She makes many phone calls, she travels with me to the Fort Wayne hospitals and she understands when plans we've made must be scrapped because pastoral services are needed. I never cease thanking God for her." (After submitting my report, I would call her forward, and I would embrace and, with genuine affection, kiss her and publicly thank her for all the "behind-the-scenes" service rendered to her Lord in and through His church.)

When Grace Church, Columbia City, Indiana, extended me a call, it arrived with a cover letter, written by the chairman of the Call Committee (an attorney) who stated, "Dear Pastor, at a duly called meeting of this congregation a brief discussion was held as to how we could recruit

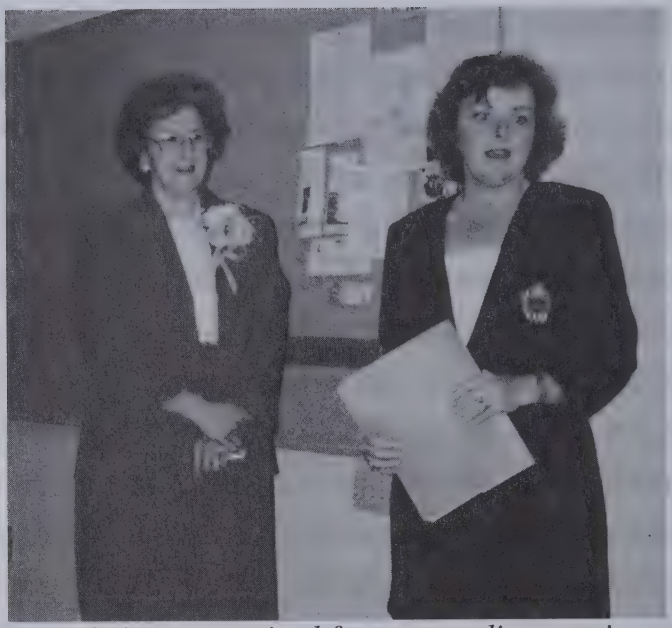
Betty Hobby for membership in our church. We decided the fastest and easiest way would be to call you to be our pastor." What a very beautiful, thoughtful way to affirm Betty, of whom they quickly grew fond.

She genuinely cared about people, and they cared about her. She generously extended her time and resources to give aid to the needy. On occasion when a parishioner was desperate, she would open our home to provide food and shelter on a temporary basis.

One night at 1:30 a.m. the telephone rang. I recognized the voice of the caller. He was obviously upset. He and his wife were members of my parish. The caller asked if the two of them could come to our home (they lived about twenty miles away); he needed to talk with me; his wife was distraught and he didn't want to leave her by herself. Could they come?

The couple was facing a situation that threatened and eventually ended their marriage. I had officiated at their wedding just seven or eight months earlier. Why at that time of night did they choose to deal with this issue? I didn't know.

When they arrived, I recall how Betty comforted the young lady who was in a state of bewilderment and was extremely upset. Betty compassionately took her to our guest room, listened to her talk, prayed with her and then tucked her into bed for the night. I spent the remainder of the night counseling the young man. Betty's love for people and her willingness to offer them help seemed to have no bounds. She possessed a true Shepherd's heart.



Being recognized for outstanding service

A husband says, "Thank you!"

With Helen Thomas, "From sorrow toil and pain . . . we shall be free. And perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity."

Back when I was a student, I served a small rural congregation in Illinois; it was my first assignment. Betty, the children, and I became very attached to the members of the Foosland congregation; they were very open and receptive to us. In a short time, we grew to love them and they reciprocated that love.

In that little village, the children had a safe environment. They had lots of playmates. With no organized recreation and not much to do, the children were required to be creative in their play time. One of their young playmates was Dennis; he was a couple of years older than our son Ronald. The two boys became great pals.

One day in early October of 1958, Dennis had gone with his father to a nearby town to pick up supplies, and on their way home, tragically, they were struck by a passing train. Young Dennis was killed. The death of this fourth grader, who for six years had a perfect Sunday School record, was a tragedy that affected everyone who lived in the Foosland area.

The accident occurred on Friday and the funeral was held on Sunday morning—replacing the regular worship service. The church was filled with mourners. The children's choir—of which Dennis had been a member—sang the hymn, "Children of the Heavenly Father." A dark cloud of grief hovered over this little village for many months.

An angel who had been in our midst was suddenly, tragically taken from us to dwell in the nearer presence of

God. I was asked many times, "Why?" I didn't have the answer and no one was wise enough to answer that question. Even if one could have answered it, the situation would not have changed. The right question, then, was this: "Now that this has happened, with God's help, where do we go from here?" This incident had a very heavy impact upon the Hobby children, the village children, and the entire community. Throughout this sad chapter in the life of a little village, Betty was a strong voice of hope and a faith-light dispelling the lingering darkness of gloom.

Betty was extremely helpful to me in ministering to the family during this time of bereavement. She had a special relationship to the mother of Dennis. Betty displayed the caring heart of a true shepherd. Because of life's experiences—the cheers and tears—that we shared so personally, the Thomas family and the Hobby family had a wonderful spiritual and enduring connection. This tragedy occurred nearly fifty years ago, and to this very day, contact with the family is maintained.

Another illustration of her shepherd's heart involved a young man whose name was Bill Johnson. He was in the Air Force and stationed at Chanute Air Force Base. Even though he hadn't yet reached his twenty-first birthday, he was married and permitted to live with his wife off base. They had an apartment in the village where I was serving as a student pastor. Bill and his wife were a long way from their families, so they spent time in our home; lovingly, Betty took them under her wing.

Bill sang in the choir and his wife helped with the Sunday School. When his tour of duty was completed, Bill intended to fulfill his calling to become a Lutheran Pastor.

The last year we were in Foosland, the Saturday before Easter, the Johnsons came to our house to spend the evening. Betty was doing what had become an annual task for her—she was dyeing Easter eggs and she had the three children helping her. The eggs were not just for our kids but also for the children of the church. Weather permitting, the Foosland Sunday School delighted in scheduling an Easter egg hunt for the small children during the Sunday School hour. A farmer donated the eggs and Betty was one of the women who volunteered to dye the eggs. Taking his instructions from Betty on what to do and how to do it, Bill helped the Hobby kids with this colorful project. His wife assisted Betty in the preparation of food for Easter dinner. I was across the street in my church study, working on the Easter sermon.

As a family, we grew very fond of this young couple. When spring arrived and nature was bursting forth with new life, Bill complained about a lack of energy; he even missed classes at the air base. One day his wife stopped by our home and shared with us the tragic news that Bill had been admitted to the base hospital. When all the tests returned we were stunned to learn that he had been diagnosed with cancer! We went to the Chanute Air Force Base hospital to visit Bill, who smiled and expressed delight in seeing Betty and me. He looked so pale and he lacked his usual measure of energy. At that time we learned that he would be transferred to the hospital at Scott Air Base in southern Illinois where he could receive more specialized care.

Betty had been like a mother to Bill and his wife even though she was only about eight years their senior. But she was a mother of three small children and seemed to possess a maturity beyond her years. We prayed with the Johnsons before their departure from our part of the state. A couple of months later, a small group from our church made the trip south to Scott Air Base; it was about as far south as one could go and still be in Illinois.

Bill and his wife were pleased to see us. It was a great visit but it was also obvious to us that Bill had lost a lot of weight; he was always slender but now his body was skin and bones. The blond hair that complimented his blue eyes had fallen victim to the cancer medicine. His hair was nearly gone! Even so, he spoke words of faith and refused to give up hope. He believed that ". . . all things work together for good for those who love God" (Romans 8:28 NRSV).

Before leaving Bill that day, we encircled his bed and prayed with him. Fortunately, I had my communion set with me, and in that hospital room we celebrated Holy Communion. I remember as we left him, Betty hugged him and assured him of our love for him and that he would be in our prayers. Silently we walked to our car. I saw the tears in Betty's eyes, and now I know that in those early years of our service to the Lord, she already possessed the heart of a shepherd.

We corresponded with Bill for a few more months and then came the news: "He went on to be with the Lord." Our friend and brother in Christ—with whom we had become like family—went on to that home which our Lord has prepared for all who live and die in faith.

The Open Door!

Through the years, when guests came knocking at our door, they were always warmly welcomed by Betty. If she knew in advance that they were coming, she would have our home in picture-book order. Never pretentious but always gracious is one way that I will remember her.

One of the young men in our parish—a professional — one day discovered he was without a home; his wife was divorcing him. He had no family in the area and he was desperate for a place to stay. Her shepherd's heart led Betty to offer the young man lodging with us until he could pick up all the pieces and move on with his life. At the time, our youngest child, a son, was in high school. He had his own quarters on the lower level of the house (bedroom and private bath).

We had an extra bedroom with bath on the main level of our home that was at the disposal of this young man. Betty was not interested in a rental arrangement. This was strictly an altruistic situation—she saw a young person in dire straits, and with a genuine concern for his well-being, she opened our home to him. We asked no remuneration for his lodging and an occasional meal—it was caring and concern for one of our parishioners that motivated Betty to reach out to offer assistance.

About a decade later, a similar situation occurred. One, who was like a son to us, was notified that his wife had filed divorce papers and that he was not permitted to enter his home. He was informed that his personal belongings were outside, ready for him to pick up. He, too, was a professional and a very active member of our congregation. Even more so, he had a special place in our hearts.

Without hesitation, the shepherd's heart of Betty led her to offer a room and private bath to this young man. We loved his family. It was painful for both of us to see him in these circumstances. Because immediate lodging was essential, he took residence in our home (by this time our youngest child was in graduate school). His stay was far shorter than the first individual who was given sanctuary in our home. In fact, we were rather sad when his time with us ended. He was like a member of our family, and to this day remains close to our hearts.

Betty was willing to go above and beyond what was expected of a pastor's wife. Truly, she had a special calling—she possessed the heart of a shepherd.

. . . And Robert Andrew arrived!

With lots to smile about

How Close Is Too Close?

The few years that we lived in a parsonage, located next door to the church, had both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it was convenient for Betty to access her husband. If she needed me, all that she had to do was walk next door. When she had an appointment with the doctor, I was available to supervise the children. It meant that I had no transportation costs to reach the church office. So there were some distinct advantages to living next door to the church.

On the negative side, living next door to the church diminished family freedom. We were convenient for walk-ins even though the visit was not of an emergency nature. In a sense, we were living in a fishbowl; we were living in "the people's house."

Betty's love for people and her desire to participate in the lives of parishioners enabled her to bridge this gap. She never knew when her home would be invaded after a board meeting or by committee members. Her *pastor/husband* was much too generous when it came to extending an after-meeting invitation, "Come on over and have some coffee and cookies." Betty made it known to me that a little advance notice would be appreciated. But no matter what

the circumstances, she graciously welcomed those who unexpectedly showed up.

At that point in time, it was expected that the wife of a pastor, an occupant of a parsonage, wear apparel that reflected a high standard, that is a skirt and blouse or a dress. Prior to the advent of air conditioning, summer temperatures were often quite uncomfortable. Consequently, when Betty was ironing clothes (for a family of five and prior to the advent of drip-dry clothes), she wore shorts; however, she kept a handy wraparound skirt, just in case the doorbell would ring and an unexpected visitor would arrive.

It may appear laughable that a woman in shorts, and especially in her own home, would be considered inappropriately attired, but fifty years ago, that was, indeed, reality for a pastor's wife. Betty knew that wearing shorts in her own home was just fine, but she had respect for the feelings of parishioners, and she made every effort to avoid what might be offensive to them.

A shepherd's heart enabled Betty to rise above any and all obstacles: some were financial, often there was reduced time with her husband, there was separation from her parents and brothers and others of her family and even from familiar surroundings. In spite of the hardships endured when I was involved in my academic and professional pursuit, those eight years were truly happy years for Betty. While real sacrifices had to be made, there were also benefits and blessings which accompanied them.

I must admit that it was a sad day for all five of us, when the moving van—loaded with our household goods—left the fertile fields of central Illinois, headed for the environs of Indianapolis, Indiana. It was difficult for Betty to leave her parents, her brothers and their families, her grandparents, her aunts, uncles, and cousins plus some close friends with whom she grew up.

Betty never voiced any resistance nor expressed regret about our leaving the place where she had roots. Thinking back to that period in our lives, I have to believe that it must been extremely painful for Betty to leave those who were so intimately a part of her life. But, God called and the Hobby family faithfully responded. Materially we had very little, but as a family we had each other, and we were learning an important lesson regarding God's wonderful providence. When the Lord calls, He provides.

Often I have said, and I cannot repeat it too often, "I could never have survived the rigors and the many years of preparation for ordination apart from God's grace and the marvelous support of Betty who possessed a shepherd's heart." She was a woman of faith, a supportive wife, a devoted mother, and a friend to all.

George Linnaeus Banks must have had Betty in mind when he penned these words:

I live for those who love me
Whose hearts are kind and true;
For the Heaven that smiles above me,
And awaits my spirit too;
For all human ties that bind me,
For the task my God assigned me,
For the high hopes yet to find me,
And the good that I can do.

A Family Emergency

Time has a way of clouding facts. I remember, however, that a phone call came through to me informing me that our son-in-law had been in an industrial accident and suffered severe burns on about seventy-five percent of his body. He was in the emergency room of the local hospital and was definitely going to be life-lined to the Indianapolis burn unit in Wishard Hospital.

Both Betty and I quickly prepared for the two-hour trip. We went directly to the Indianapolis hospital from northern Indiana. Stunned and deeply concerned over the possibility of losing our son-in-law, we drove the distance in record time.

Upon arrival, we were escorted back to the room where our loved one was being given expert care. When we first saw him, he looked like a mummy, all wrapped up in gauze with just his eyes visible. In that moment we realized how quickly one could be taken from among us; we realized how deeply we loved this young man whom our younger daughter had chosen for a husband. We prayed often and turned to Scripture for strength and help in that critical time.

Betty—with her shepherd's heart—stayed by Roger's bedside giving no thought about returning home until she could be assured that he would come through this ordeal. She returned home with me that first night, but the next morning, after packing adequate provisions that would enable her to stay on as long as she was needed, Betty returned to the Indianapolis hospital, spending many hours just being there to offer support.

Through that period of time when Roger was hospitalized, Betty stayed with our daughter giving her the needed support and assisting her in coping with that tragedy which impacted the entire family.

Faith and Family

Faith and Family

7.
A Book of Memories

Memories Are Forever

The nieces and nephews whom Betty deeply loved shown with our four children (the younger generation of cousins).

In the last months of her life, I noticed that Betty would sometimes lie on the couch in the family room, where she would on occasion listen to stereo music and at other times watch television. One of our favorite programs was *The Golden Girls* about four women each distinctively different from the others and yet who made a humorous story as they experienced life as a family. Another program that Betty enjoyed was *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* Some of the game shows caught her interest; she was adept at coming up with words, places, and that sort of thing. College basketball and football especially interested her.

In retrospect, I remember how she would spend time lying on the couch in the living room—a room which she loved for its formality. Hours later, I would see her out in the sunroom in the wicker lounge chair, her feet up on the ottoman and a quilt around her. She was enjoying the beauty of our backyard, where she spent many hours providing tender love and care to her flowers. From her vantage point she could see the bird feeders, which she faithfully filled. She was a bird watcher and in the winter months loved watching the finches (birds that look like canaries). As she sat there during those closing months, looking out on the yard which was always kept neat and appropriately clipped, perhaps she thought of the many hours which she had spent weeding flower beds, watering her flowers, raking leaves, and even mowing the lawn. (The latter was usually my duty. She only mowed if I happened to be out of town.)

She was happiest when she could be outside doing something to enhance the beauty of our property. I used to tell her, "You can take the girl from the farm but you can't take the farm from the girl." In Betty's case that certainly was true.

I observed Betty moving from room to room from the living-room to the family room to the sun room. In each of those rooms, she would recline and appear to be reflecting. Was she thinking about some of the many occasions when our family joyfully gathered and filled those spaces? Was she praying, as she often did, thanking the Lord for a comfortable home in which she took great pride? Were the memories associated with each of the rooms bringing to her a bit of serenity?

On reflection, I find myself thinking of questions that I would like to ask her. So many nights we would lie in the darkness and talk. It seemed that I never ran out of material that I wanted to share with her—places that I had been, people whom I met, and concerns that I had. Sometimes the telephone would ring in the dead of night or the early hours of morning, summoning me to a home or to the hospital. Usually when I was called out at night, it also ended Betty's sleeping. After our children were gone from home, on occasion she would accompany me to the location of the emergency. She loved the people whom the Lord called us to serve. When she was in a position to do so, she was unhesitant in offering her services.

Betty and I did a pretty good job of communicating. We were each other's best friend. Often I think, "If only I

could have her back for just one month, I have so much that I would like to share and discuss with her." Life seems to have its way of filling our hours and calendars; consequently, too few conversations of the simple but meaningful things take place. So in the end we are often left lamenting and thinking, "If only . . . if only. . . ."

Grandma's kitchen: a great place to hang out

The Bird Watcher

Through the years, I noticed that my wife loved to watch the birds and squirrels. The latter were constantly, creatively seeking ways to get at the seed that Betty put out for the birds. For me it was interesting to observe how the birds quickly became dependent upon the seed that she would put into their feeders. Her fascination with the finch population was exceeded only by her fondness for the cardinals. Betty purchased special feed in order to attract these beautiful creatures and to provide for their need. Birds did not go hungry in our yard.

Her favorite bird, however, was the cardinal. And we were never lacking cardinals outside of our house. In fact, there was one (a male) that would perch on our front storm door handle. Since it was our practice during daylight hours to keep the heavy inside door open, often we would see this cardinal sitting on the door's handle. It would peck on the glass. I suppose it was seeking attention from Betty and/or possibly it was doing its best to express thanks for her friendship and thoughtfulness.

The Day the Eagle Landed

Weeks before she passed away, Betty called to me from the family room, where she was lying on the big couch, looking out of a rather large, double window. I sensed a degree of urgency in her voice, so I hurried to her. She pointed to something outside that I will never forget and will never quite fully understand. In a tree approximately twenty feet from our house was perched an eagle. About five feet to the side of it, in a different tree, was a baby eagle (it was white).

I hastened to the bedroom to fetch my field glasses, wanting to see this unusual and fascinating bird up close without scaring it off. I keep asking myself, "Why didn't I get the camcorder? Or a camera?" Maybe it was the Lord's will that this scene be reserved for Betty and me. The eagle was facing our house and it remained perched there for about twenty minutes, and then, with its young, the large, strong bird disappeared as quickly as it had appeared.

Why did an eagle come to New Castle, Indiana? Why would it come to perch on a branch outside our family room window, facing the house where Betty could see it so

distinctly? Was this an omen from God and did Betty understand its meaning? That thought continues to plague me. It is a question for which I will never have the answer.

Precious Memories . . .

The year prior to Betty's cancer operation, she was in the backyard raking leaves. She decided to burn them in the trash can burner which we had at the northwest corner of our property. When I arrived home I noticed that because of the wind and dry condition (we hadn't had rain for a week or more) the fire was seeping out of the holes on the side of the trash can. Soon, the grass was burning and spreading to the other side of the fence. The house to the north of us was empty, but I could envision a quick spread of the fire, and it would be out of our control.

Can you imagine having to call the fire department because of a brushfire for which you are responsible? I ran to where we had our hose hooked up and, fortunately, we were able to extinguish the fire. I pleaded with Betty to refrain from any future burning of leaves. That incident really aroused an adrenalin rush within me.

Betty always seemed to display unusual energy, and when she was outdoors, that energy level tended to increase. I often thought that the outdoor experiences took her back to the distant farm of her childhood and the many occasions when she assisted her father. She would run errands for him, or when he was planting or harvesting the crops, take

his lunch to him. There were many details out on the farm that she could do and which she enjoyed doing. She had a lot of respect for her father. She loved her father dearly. Assisting him with work on the farm was something she remembered throughout her life. She shared with me stories related to "walking the beans." This was an activity related to walking through the bean field and with hoe in hand eliminating weeds. Farmers took great pride in having a field that looked clean.

Our children, when visiting their grandparents out on the farm experienced the joy of being introduced to the time-consuming task of walking the beans. I must admit that after an hour or so, they were ready to "throw in the hoe" and get on to something more entertaining.

Accidents Do Happen!

Betty was an early riser and one morning, since there were guests in our home, she went to the grocery store to purchase some needed breakfast items. A short distance from our home, she was sitting at a red light. The light turned green and she cautiously proceeded into the intersection. She used caution, because it was a foggy morning. The driver of a pickup truck, in a hurry to get to work, was not so cautious and he ran the red light hitting Betty's vehicle on the driver's side. Had she been wearing her seat belt, she definitely would have suffered serious injuries and perhaps even death. This accident took place prior to the seat-belt law. The car that Betty was driving was totaled!

Transported to the local hospital's emergency room, Betty was carefully examined and then released. Her body was badly bruised, and she was confined to the sofa for days and went through weeks of recuperation. Miraculously, she escaped permanent injury and she came out of that accident with no broken bones. Our youngest child was only eight years old at the time of this accident. All of us came through that day having learned a vital lesson: life is fragile.

Betty, the Traveler

My retirement was being discussed at home. Betty was certain that I would never retire, and she didn't have trouble with that thought, because she knew in her heart that life would be miserable for me without a congregation to love and serve.

However, we decided that to make our sunset years as fulfilling as possible, we needed to explore the possibility of traveling. Betty thought she would enjoy going places and experiencing new things if I didn't have to do all the driving. As a teenager, she was in a car accident. Then in 1970, she was in the previously mentioned auto accident. Ice on the road caused the first one and a driver running a red light caused the second accident. However, both of these accidents left her a bit uneasy when traveling in an automobile.

As she would put it, "It is not that I don't feel comfortable with you at the wheel, I just feel uneasy about what others on the road will be doing." Betty did travel in spite of her anxious moments on the highway. Several times we drove to Florida. At least once a year we drove to Pennsylvania, and we made many trips to her home in Illinois. She was a very good driver, and through the years, she drove by herself to visit her mother in Illinois.

Breakfast before the day's journey

Clark & Betty take center stage; to their right are Art & Maybelle Grimm—New Year's Eve, on the cruiseship, Leeward.

With that being said, she especially enjoyed when we took trips with JuMa Tours. Via Motorcoach, we visited Branson, Missouri; the New England states; Holland, Michigan; Williamsburg, Virginia; Washington, D.C.; and more. She loved traveling with a group.

Betty's favorite vacation spots were: Clearwater Beach, Florida, and Lindsey's place near Naples, Florida. She was fascinated by the ocean, and she would rise early in the morning to walk the beach and look for exotic shells. We, on occasion, sat on a bench on the ocean's shore and just quietly looked out at the sea. She enjoyed watching the sea gulls and pelicans. Before she passed away she told me that one of her goals was to take a cruise to Alaska—friends who had done so reported that it was a must! But actually we took only one cruise.

Betty enjoying the beach

Standing on the shore

A Cruise

One day our daughter Janet had some news for us. She and her husband Jim had been talking with some of their friends about a cruise to the Bahamas. There were four couples involved and they purchased their tickets far in advance of the cruise to take advantage of a cost break. As it was reported to us, their cabins were on the lower decks, but their plan was to request an upgrade at the time of boarding, which seemed to be the thing to do. At economy rates, sometimes one is fortunate to land a more favorable cabin on one of the upper decks.

We listened with interest. A couple of days later, Betty said, "Clark, why don't we call Art and Maybelle (dear friends who were wintering at their condo in Florida) and have them check on the possibility of the four of us doing that cruise on the Leeward. Wouldn't it be fun to surprise Jan, Jim, and their friends by showing up? We could say to them, 'Surprise!' Please call Art and see if he and Maybelle would be free to go."

I made the phone call. Art and Maybelle were thrilled with the idea. They checked with their Florida travel agents, and we ended up with reservations. We

boarded the large vessel on Friday afternoon and we disembarked on Monday. It was a special New Year's Eve cruise, and we all had a wonderful experience. Knowing it was Betty's idea that we explore the possibility of going made that cruise even more special.

Celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary with our children and their spouses (Mackinac Island, Michigan)

A Family Outing

Betty talked for months about this once in a life time vacation. It took place in July of 1999, and we planned it as part of our 50th wedding anniversary—a trip to Mackinac Island, Michigan. Betty and I decided we would host the trip, inviting just our four children and their spouses. We made an exception and consented to having Bob and Jenny take their firstborn, Hannah, with them.

I rented a van so that we could all travel together. Due to work scheduling, Ron and Renee traveled separately (on their motorcycle) and joined us at the first day's end in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. From that point on, they followed the van in which the rest of us traveled, as we headed toward our destination, Mackinac Island. To access the island, we took the hydro-jet ferry.

Our stay on the island (where the only means of travel is via horse-drawn carriages, bicycles or horse-back) was in a lovely motel, Harbour View Inn, where we spent two nights. The second evening, Betty and I hosted the family for dinner; it was sumptuous. We had our private veranda with two large circular tables and we overlooked the bay. The setting could not have been more delightful. All of us found the food both delicious and plentiful. The whole

experience at Mackinac Island could not have been improved upon. We left as we arrived, by way of the hydro-jet ferry.

Our next destination was the Bavarian Inn Lodge at Frankenmuth, Michigan. It rained, and at times torrentially, which caused us alarm for Ron and Renee on the motorcycle, but they were equipped with rain gear. It seemed to worry those of us in the van more than it did them.

Upon our arrival, we checked into the huge Bavarian Inn. I remember vividly that occasion, because after Betty and I set our luggage down, I turned on the television set and at that moment learned that the airplane carrying John Kennedy, Jr., his wife, and sister in-law had been lost at sea. Young Kennedy was at the controls of the

Crossing the bay . . .

aircraft; the three of them had flown up from New York to attend a wedding.

A visit to Bronner's to see the largest display of Christmas trees, ornaments, and a variety of Christmas items under one roof was fascinating. We then refreshed ourselves and prepared for a chicken dinner at one of Frankenmuth's famous dining facilities. The next day we loaded our vehicle and began the homeward journey. When arriving home, Betty and I agreed that we had experienced a wonderful prelude to the "official" celebration of our fifty years of marriage, scheduled for early August.

Touring With JuMa

After I retired, Betty and I took some memorable trips with JuMa Tours. JuMa Tours planned everything; once we loaded our luggage, we didn't have to lug it again. At each stop—at the end of the day—our luggage was delivered to the motel/hotel door. The coach (bus) was equipped with comfortable seats, television screens for viewing tapes, and, of course, a restroom for emergency use. Judy, the wife of our driver Max, served as hostess and, with her wonderful personality, made each of the travelers feel at ease. She is a tremendous asset to her husband in this regard. If a passenger had a question, she was right there with the answer.

Max, a former pastor, lead the travelers in a brief prayer before taking to the highway at the beginning of the day. There was prayer prior to meals when the group sat down together for dinner, which often was the case. Our first trip with JuMa was to Branson, Missouri; another was to Holland, Michigan, and the longest tour was to all six of the New England states. Betty loved each minute of all the trips we took. She especially enjoyed the tours because of her love for people. Taking these tours opened the door for us to become acquainted with people whom we otherwise

would not have gotten to know. Betty also enjoyed the bus tours because all of the arrangements were made for us. I could sit back and enjoy the trip with her, leaving the driving, the parking, and all that goes with it to someone else.

Each tour had its uniqueness, but with all of them, we had Max doing the driving and we had his wife Judy as the hostess. The two of them were (are) a blessing, bringing a lot of joy into the lives of those who have travelled with them—two of them being Betty and Clark.

Boston Market, Massachusetts

New England—one of our last vacations together

8.
More Memories

The Devoted Daughter

Dating back to her father's death, Betty gave a lot of attention to her mother. It wasn't always easy because no matter how many trips she made to visit with her mother, it didn't seem to be enough. Mom Keith was a generous person in her own right. If you needed her, she would drop everything to be there for you. Conversely, she at times could be quite demanding.

When we had a few days to get away, on occasion, I would suggest to Betty that we surprise her mother with an unannounced visit. Always, it brought much joy to her mother's heart. However, when we had to leave, Mom Keith would say, "Can't you stay a little longer?" No matter how long we stayed, it wouldn't have been long enough, because her life, too, consisted of faith and family. She lived for her family.

I recall the pain which Betty experienced when she watched her mother move (of necessity) from the farm into

town. As a widow, she was leaving the house in which she had raised her children and which, for her, held precious memories. From the sink in the kitchen, she could see the farm house where her parents had raised her. After marrying her husband Robert they moved into the farm house in which all three children were reared. It was the farm where her husband died of a heart attack and she was left a widow. But there were many cherished memories attached to the country home; it was extremely painful to leave it and, at an elderly age, adjust to another home in town.

Betty's paternal aunt and uncles with her father (3rd from left)

Betty, her brothers, and their wives did what they could to make the move to town as smooth and pleasant as possible. There were some advantages to the move of which she needed reminding, not the least of which was being closer (geographically) to grandchildren. (It needs to be said that the house—three bedrooms and two baths on a nice lot—was very comfortable and spacious enough for Mom Keith to host occasional family gatherings.)

A Loss From Which Betty Never Fully Recovered

Betty's father was taken from us suddenly. He had been to a hospital in Chicago for tests and treatment but, generally, we thought that his health was fairly good. His death came as a shock to all of us! Dad Keith had just finished eating lunch with his daughter-in-law Joyce. After a few minutes of relaxation, he decided to get back to work. He climbed up on the tractor and headed back toward the field where he was working. He must have sensed that something was very wrong and, apparently, reached over and disengaged the tractor's motor (took it out of gear), slumped over the steering mechanism, and died.

Fortunately, I was at home and took the call informing us of his sudden death. Quickly, we gathered the children together, informed them of their grandfather's death, and then we packed our bags for the trip to Illinois so that we could join the rest of our grieving family.

After the funeral, Betty stayed in Illinois to provide support for her mother. There were many decisions that needed to be made, and Betty was there to assist her mother in whatever way that she could.

With the passing of time, while we frequently would speak of her father—recalling what a wonderful influence he was in the life of his children and grandchildren—Betty never openly dwelt on her great loss. I could sense, however, that for the rest of her life, she silently grieved the loss of her father, for whom she had great respect. He was a tremendous listener and not one to exercise judgement on others or give others advice. He generally kept his opinions to himself.

Suffice it to say, Betty and her father had a close and loving relationship. Losing him so suddenly was truly traumatic, and adjusting to life without him was extremely difficult for Betty.

The fact that distance precluded the possibility of frequent visits with her father during those last eight years of his life probably made his death even more difficult for her to accept.

Faith and family were what defined Betty's life, and to lose her father so suddenly and without the possibility of speaking some last words of love and affection was devastating to her. Because of her strong bond with her father, Betty and I decided that our younger son would be her father's namesake. (Our younger son was given the names of his grandfathers; since Betty's father was still living, we gave him deference and, thus, named our son Robert Andrew.)

We were thankful that he was able to witness the birth of our four children. We were grateful to God that he was in attendance when I received my degree from the university and later my divinity degree from the seminary. He was

there (and shed a few tears of joy) the evening that I was ordained a Lutheran pastor. Betty's father was always supportive of us. Betty loved him deeply and his death was a loss from which she never fully recovered.

The consummate grandmother

Grandchildren galore

The last to arrive

The Consummate Grandmother

We were in our first year at Columbia City, Indiana, when Betty and I became grandparents for the first time. Our son Ron was in school in Indianapolis and only home on weekends. His wife and son lived in our home. Betty loved every minute of it. He was an adorable baby, and his grandmother delighted in caring for the child. It brought a sense of emptiness, and not a little amount of pain, when the family moved to the big city of Indianapolis. Our son had rented a small, modest apartment, enabling the three of them to be together while Ron continued his education.

This was the beginning of a new dimension to Betty's life: being a grandmother. She was an excellent mother and went on to reach that same level of excellence when it came to being a grandmother. Betty lived to enjoy nine grandchildren (the birth of the tenth came three months to the day of her death) and ten great-grandchildren—the eleventh was born after Betty died.

Her life was best defined in terms of faith and family. When one of the family members had a need, she was there to offer both her time and resources. I have often heard it said that there are two kinds of people in the world: the givers and the takers. Betty was a giver! This was true

not only of our immediate family, but it was evident in the dutiful, compassionate way in which she cared for her aged mother. It could also be seen in the way she responded to the needs of members of the various churches that we were privileged to serve.

When we lived in the northern part of the state, we greatly missed our children and their families; however, there were those weekend visits to which we looked forward. Betty was thrilled when the children and grandchildren were with us in our home. Generally, the children coordinated their visits so that they were not there at the same time, with the exception of holidays and on those occasions our house was bulging at the seams.

Staggering their visits enabled us to have some special time with them, and it also meant that there were more weekends when we were with family.

Through the early years of grandparenting in our family, the boys outnumbered the girls five to two; however, the last three grandchildren born were girls so that the count is now even. (Without our two stepgrandsons, the boys are still in the majority.)

Although Betty didn't live to see the arrival of the tenth grandchild, she knew that the child would be a girl and that she would be her grandmother's namesake. Elizabeth Jean was born precisely three months to the day, to the hour, and almost to the minute of her grandmother's passing.

The birth of a grandchild was always the highlight of the year. In fact, in 1973 our two daughters gave birth the very same day, and five days earlier our son had become a

Elizabeth Jean Hobby—named after grandmother (Betty) whom she never saw

Happy days

father; we celebrated three grandchildren within a five-day period. All three received the sacrament of Holy Baptism in the same service, administered by their Grandpa Hobby, at Grace Lutheran Church, Columbia City, Indiana.

As the grandchildren grew, it was exciting to have them spend the night. After they entered school, the summers pulsated with much joy because not only did the grandchildren take turns spending a week with grandma and grandpa, but the week ended with a shopping spree at the mall to purchase some school clothes. Each had some input as to the clothing decisions.

Those summers were filled with swimming, miniature golf, movies, and eating out! Back then, it was a rarity and a genuine treat to eat in a restaurant.

Through the years, at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter all the grandchildren came—at the same time—and, of course, bringing their parents with them. The weekend was filled with lots of play and laughter and with good meals prepared by an experienced chef—Grandma Hobby. What the grandchildren remember is recorded in their own words:

"The memories that stick with me the most are the trips to Hershey, Pennsylvania. Grandpa somehow was always able to get us in to see famous places or some important people. I will never forget the time that we got to meet with the president of The Hershey Company. Our eyes were wide open when he brought out handfuls of Hershey candies and offered them to us. . . . I still remember the place we used to stay in, though the name of the place now escapes me . . . I often remember the times I spent in

Hershey and would like for my kids to have the same experience in this chocolate haven as I did as a child."

Another grandchild states, "When Grandma and Grandpa Hobby lived in New Castle, they had a brick wall that we were told not to play on. Steve, Jim, Chris (cousins) and I would jump off of it anyway and we would play hide and seek behind it."

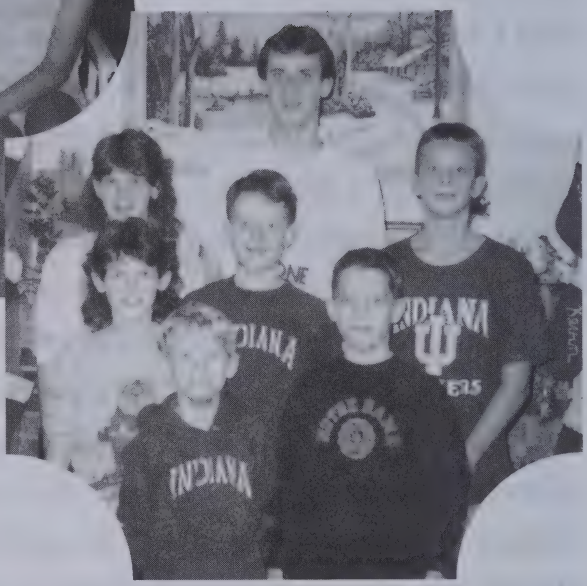
They (grandchildren) all have special memories made possible because of their loving grandmother Betty. Their thoughts include: "Grandma and Grandpa took all of us grandchildren (Kevin was too young to go) to Hershey one summer. While we always enjoyed Chocolate World and the amusement park, it was especially a treat to stay together in a hotel. . . . Grandma and Grandpa gravitated toward lodging that included extra amenities, those that would cater to the needs of energetic children. The most important of these was a swimming pool."

"I remember a winter gathering at Grandma and Grandpa's house in Auburn, Indiana. It was a picturesque Christmas—plenty of cold and snow piled outside, warm and cozy inside. Come nighttime, sleeping bags covered nearly every square foot of the family and dining rooms.

This is where we (the grandchildren) slept and we loved it. Who needed a bed when you had opportunity to camp out on the floor? We would whisper and giggle and desperately resist the urge to sleep. There was something special about moments like those.

"I don't know how we all fit into the house, or how there could have been enough hot water for all the showers.

Angel was welcomed into the family.



Christmas at Grandma's

Celebrating Great Grandma's 90th birthday

(I'm certain that grandma had something to do with the scheduling.) I am grateful for the opportunities to gather with my cousins now, as an adult, but I will always be thankful for the adults (especially Grandma Hobby) who made it possible for us (the children) to spend time together, side by side, in sleeping bags on the floor."

A granddaughter adds, "A lot of memories that include my cousins happened at Grandpa and Grandma Hobby's house. . . . Minus the long drive, I loved going to their house and especially at Christmastime. It was always fun to see who would be there when we arrived or sit and wait for others to come once we were there. Every Christmas Eve, we would go to the late church service and then come back and snack on crackers and cheese ball or veggies and dip, before going to bed. All of us cousins would bring sleeping bags and camp out on the floor. Every year we were told several times to 'go to bed,' but it was so much fun to talk and laugh and just be kids.

"One of the most memorable moments of my life was when I, with all my cousins, carried Grandma Hobby's casket. At such a somber and lonely point in time, I realized how much I truly rely on each of them (cousins)."

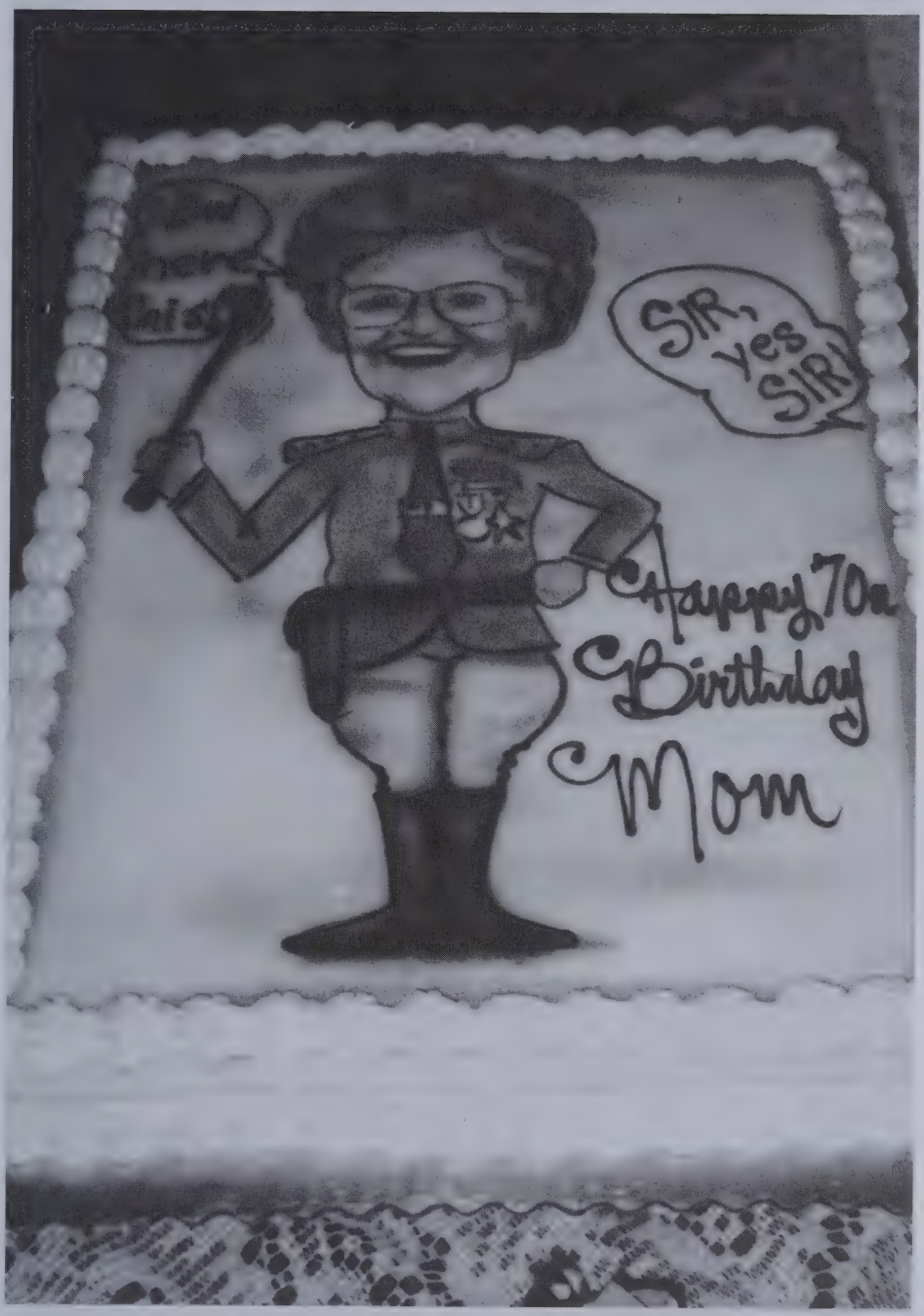
When help was needed, Grandma was a first responder. She had enormous love for each family member. She was truly a devoted supporter of her grandchildren. She could always be counted on to be among those seated in the bleachers, cheering on her grandchild and his/her team. Grandma Hobby became a great fan of tennis, track, basketball, football, and cross country. When possible, if one of

the grandchildren was competing in a sport, she was there to offer her unquestioned support.

Christmas shopping became more and more time-consuming as the number of family members increased. Early on she would ask each grandchild to give her a wish list, and from there, she engaged in the annual search for just the right gift. As she shopped, she kept a tally on dollars spent so that each of the gifts reflected equity. None was shown partiality, because each of them was precious.

Betty lived to see grandchildren baptized, confirmed in faith, and graduated from high school and college; she was present when some of them were married. She always delighted in hearing reports that told of her grandchildren's accomplishments. Many young people are fortunate to have grandparents who show interest in them and shower them with love. Our grandchildren are among them. Betty was the consummate grandmother. Daily, she prayed for all of her grandchildren.

I, personally, will never forget that particular day when even the heavens were weeping. Yes, it was raining as our nine grandchildren—on either side of the casket and one on the end—carried the lifeless body of their loving grandmother to its resting place. That solemn occasion I will never, ever forget. The picture of it is indelibly imprinted in my mind.

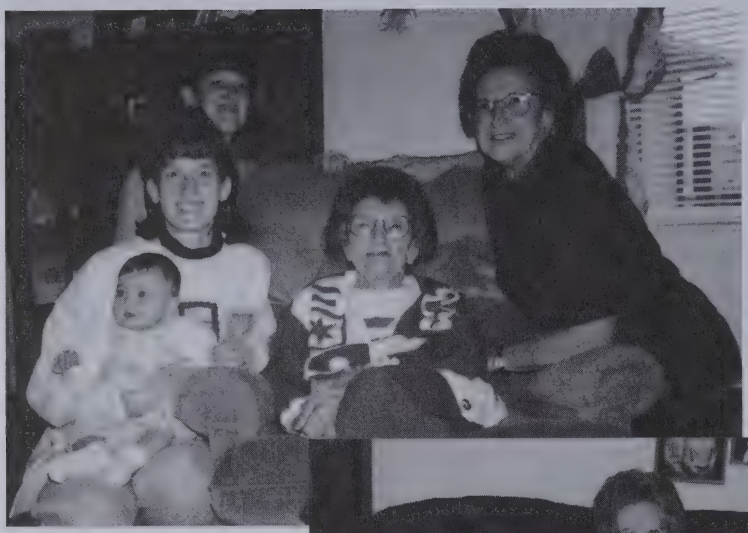


Her children and grandchildren called her "The General."

A happy birthday for Grandma

Betty and Clark's eleven great-grandchildren

Five Generation Pictures



Betty, Grandma, Jan, Jenny, and Regan

Betty, Grandma, Linda, Chris, and Bryce

Betty, Grandma, Ron, Steve, and Montana

The Lover of Music

One of the items that I prized over the years was a spinet piano that Robert and Ethel purchased for their teenage daughter Betty. It was part of our household furnishings from 1949, when we were married, to about 1973—at which time we purchased a pair of matching Wurlitzers: piano and organ. We looked upon this big step (financial) as an investment in the music life of our son Robert. As a baby in the crib, he was already displaying a sense of rhythm and an enjoyment of music. This we wanted to foster.

Our investment paid off! Early in his life, Bob manifested prodigious gifts, and one of those gifts was in music. With the encouragement of his parents and with piano and then organ lessons, he played the big pipe organ at Grace Lutheran Church for his first wedding. He was only in the fifth grade. Bob excelled at the piano and organ, and his mother was his "page turner." (As I recall one of the selections that he played, at that first wedding, during the prelude, was Handel's *Largo*).

So Bob was the catalyst for Betty and me taking that plunge into the "lake of investment" when we acquired the piano and organ. (He used them regularly, as he passed through those early years.) He practiced on them for at least

two hours every day. After graduating from Wittenberg University with a degree in Church Music, Bob went on to do his master's degree in organ performance at the University of Notre Dame. When he eventually purchased a home, we offered him his choice of the piano or organ. He wisely selected the piano.

Betty and I were left with the organ, which became a permanent fixture in our living room. I still have and I use that organ even though thirty-four years have come and gone. While Betty used the organ on a regular basis, she really felt more at home when sitting at the keyboard of a piano. In high school, she worked hard developing her musical skills and developed into a fine pianist.

While I was in seminary, piano students came to our home and were blessed with her teaching. It supplemented our meager income but, beyond that, it passed on to others her zest for music, inspiring them in their own quest. She was a good teacher! Always in her instructions, she emphasized the importance of accurate rhythm.

"Sing to the Lord a New Song . . ."

(Psalm 96:1)

When Betty was a teenager, she not only played the piano, the organ, the trombone, and the tuba but also the guitar. Her lessons regarding the guitar were short-lived. In addition to instruments, she was a fine alto and sang in the high school chorus. Betty had a good singing voice, although she wouldn't own up to it. In each of the churches of which we were members, she was a welcomed and valued member of the choir.

Having minored in music at the University of Illinois with a choral emphasis, I took voice lessons as well as courses in choral directing. On one occasion, I was asked to sing a solo at one of our vesper services. That evening when we arrived home and were relaxing, I asked Betty, "Well, how did you like my solo?" Her response was brief: "Honey, you should stick to preaching." Never again did I "favor" the congregation with a solo. Always, I highly valued Betty's judgement and had great respect for her musical prowess.

A few weeks before she passed away, I assisted her in getting ready for bed. Usually she would retire by seven or seven-thirty in the evening. Because I wanted to keep a close eye on her, I borrowed a speaker system from one of

the grandchildren who had used it for her baby so that she could immediately respond to the cries of her child. In the same way I felt comfortable sitting out in the family room, reading or watching television, knowing that I could hear Betty if she called to me from our bedroom.

That evening—just a few weeks before she left us—I heard her singing. I went back to the bedroom to confirm that all was well. I asked, "Is everything alright?"

She said, "Oh, yes!" Then she asked me, "Why do you ask?" I explained that I thought I had heard her talking. "Oh," she said, "I was singing to my Lord."

Then I asked, "What were you singing?"

She replied, "I just made up the words as I sang along."

It brings a lump to my throat and tears to my eyes as I remember her saying, "I was singing to my Lord." Her faith was vibrant. Though the cancer would soon take her life, she left us with a song in her heart; she knew that no matter what happened, as a follower of Christ, for her all was well.

Betty, the Loyal Friend

"A friend in need is a friend indeed!"

After Betty had passed away, many who called or who sent notes expressing condolences, without exception commented about Betty being a wonderful friend whom they will miss greatly.

A special friend of many years, Darlene writes, "Betty was like a sister to me. We would often laugh because we'd catch ourselves thinking the same thoughts. There were times when we would both begin to say the same thing at the very same time.

"I will never forget a particular Church Council Retreat that was held at a motel in Ft. Wayne. While the council was meeting in a conference room at the motel, Betty invited all the spouses to her room for a time of sharing. We were all laughing loudly, having a good time when all of a sudden there was a knock at the door. Oh no! Have we been disruptive to other guests in the motel? We just didn't know what to expect. The knock continued, so Betty went to the door, opened it, and there stood Bobby Hobby. Knowing that our church council was having the retreat in Ft. Wayne, he came by to check things out. If we thought that the group was lively prior to his arrival, believe me

when I say it became even more so with the infusion of Bobby's humor. It is a wonder that we weren't issued a warning that if things didn't calm down we would have to leave. We were just having a lot of fun, and it was on a Friday evening. Apparently, we didn't create too much of a problem for the front desk, because nothing was said to us. Had a group of Lutherans been 'thrown out' of a motel for being a public nuisance, it would have made an interesting headline in our hometown newspaper.

"There are many memories that will remain precious to me—memories of situations in which Betty Hobby was involved. We shared many happy times together. Betty, I know, was a great fan of the Square Dances which were held in the autumn of the year for members of our church family; they were sponsored by our Aid Association for Lutheran Chapter, spearheaded by my husband, Leroy, and his committee. There is much more that I could say about Betty, but I must reduce it all to these few words: she was a valued friend and I will always miss her.

"One last thing. Both Betty and I collected angels. When my friend, Betty, became seriously ill, I gave her one of my special porcelain angels (I had a duplicate). She was really fond of it. It is a music box, and it plays, "Amazing Grace." This particular angel (I have one identical to it) has become even more special for me and I will always treasure it, because it will always remind me of my friend, Betty."

9.
We Believe in Miracles

A Comforting Gesture

In the mission church that we served in Connersville, one of her "special friends" remained a special friend even though decades had passed. During Betty's illness, this friend made a beautiful quilt for Betty to use during those months she spent on the davenport. Esther, whom I had the privilege of baptizing, along with her two daughters, came to visit Betty. She and her husband Kenny brought not only the beautiful, useful quilt (nicely labeled as to who made it) but they also brought some delicious food which they had thoughtfully prepared.

All those months when Betty was pretty much confined to the sofa, she had the joy of knowing that the quilt which kept her warm was the creation of a dear friend with whom she had spent much time through the years. As it surrounded her body, the quilt was a symbol of a love and friendship that enveloped Betty.

The stories are voluminous and are too many to record, but they stand as a testimony to the many lives that Betty had enriched and which, in turn, had blessed life for her.

We Called Her Grandma

One of Betty's longtime friends was a woman who very dedicatedly served her Lord. She was the kind of parishioner any pastor is blessed to have as a member. She never, ever sought the limelight for herself, and she never attempted to use her resourcefulness to get her way. If it was good for the congregation, it was something for which she prayed and to which she gave her full support.

We became acquainted with Margaret shortly after her husband died. When we moved into the parish, all four of our children were still at home. She took an interest in the family and its activities. She became like a member of the family and soon took on the title, "Grandma." Having lost her only sibling, a sister, she told us that Betty Hobby looked like her sister and even had some of her characteristics. We grew to love Margaret as a family member and we grieved when she was called from the church militant on earth to the church triumphant in heaven. It seems unthinkable that I should write the story of Betty's life and not mention this wonderful, Christian lady—as good a friend as one can have—who brought a lot of joy, not only to Betty but to the entire family. On holidays and special occasions, a parsonage family

cannot always be with their own relatives. Often members of the church family fill that gap, and for the Hobby family, that is what Margaret did. She was a dear friend to Betty, and she was loved by all of our family members.

Bobby's portrait painted by Marie Goth—a gift from Margaret

A Friend Is Precious

To think of Betty as a friend prompts one to think of the countless number of persons who befriended Betty, enriching her life. One who must be mentioned because of the special relationship that we had with her is Florence. Over many years, she, Betty, and I walked hand in hand through joys and sorrows. There were times when we were able to celebrate the good things in life, and there were other times when we were there for each other when tears wet our cheeks.

Her husband Nick was still living at the time that we first met Florence. Our first meeting took place when her daughter-in-law was a patient in the intensive care unit at New Castle's Henry County Hospital.

It was adversity that brought us together. More importantly it was our faith in the Lord that cemented our friendship. As time passed, Florence moved from our circle of friendship into the circle of extended family. Betty and I knew that if ever we needed someone's prayer or a voice to cheer us, Florence would be the first to knock on our door. Conversely, if she needed the support of people who genuinely cared, she lived with the confidence that Betty and I would be by her side.

One of our blessings in life has been the meaningful, enduring friendship of Florence, a faithful servant of Christ. While she was never a member of a congregation that I served, there were occasions when she worshipped with us. Those who know her know that Florence is a devoted follower of our Lord. It was our common faith in Jesus Christ that crystallized a relationship that exceeds the definition of friendship. Betty was her trusted friend and Florence was Betty's beloved friend.

To Florence and to all who brought sunshine and joy into Betty's life, my family and I express appreciation for your valued friendship. To each of you we pay special tribute.

One Wintery Night

It was a nasty night. The wind was blowing and the snow was falling. On the evening news, warnings were issued. Drivers were urged to be cautious because of hazardous driving conditions. It was about six o'clock when the door bell rang. Standing in the doorway was a young medical doctor, whom we had known since he was a teenager; he was the son of dear friends of ours. He had heard about Betty's medical condition, and he had braved the storm in order to show us support at a very difficult time. Betty had undergone surgery and was diagnosed with two kinds of cancer. She was at home convalescing from surgery but had not yet begun her chemotherapy.

Betty was absolutely overwhelmed with the love being shown in this act of kindness. He offered to go out into the night to buy our dinner and bring it to us. We assured him that we had already eaten our evening meal. I was in the early stages of learning how to prepare our meals. Betty would instruct me from the couch, and she seemed pleased with my progress as the resident "chef."

I asked David, "What other stops must you make in New Castle before heading back home?"

"This is it," he replied. His only reason for making that long drive in blizzard conditions was to see Betty. We were astounded by his compassion. We were strengthened by his love and concern. At this point, we had no idea what was ahead for Betty; we had no idea that she would not survive the battle in which she was already engaged against a lethal enemy.

It was an honor for me to have been David's pastor. Both Betty and I watched him move through his high school years, excelling in the classroom and in the arena of athletics. He was a quality young man who exhibited the attributes of those who bring honor to their family, their church, and the community in which they live. We were overwhelmed to think that, with an anesthesiologist's busy schedule, he came to show us support and to provide us with the assurance that we would be in his thoughts and prayers. When he backed out of our driveway and turned his vehicle in the direction of home, we paused to thank the Lord for David and for so many like him whose Christian love and prayers helped Betty get through some very dark and tremendously difficult times.

Finding a Needle in the Haystack

One evening, Betty and I decided to have our evening meal at a small restaurant on the west end of town. We ordered and waited for the meal to be served. "What did you do this afternoon?" I asked her. Descriptively, she told me that she had spent most of the afternoon cleaning the house, running the sweeper, and so on. She then wanted to know what was on my schedule, and I told her that my afternoon was spent taking communion to our shut-ins.

After we chatted for a while, our food was brought to the table. As we ate, Betty let out a muted "Oh no!"

"What is the matter," I asked? I could see that she was visibly upset and on the verge of tears.

"Look Clark, I lost the diamond out of my ring." No longer interested in food, she said, "Let's go home."

As we drove home, I assured her that I would get a replacement; maybe our insurance would cover the loss. But that didn't satisfy her. She was never one who fixated on things, but I had given her a new diamond ring and wedding band on the occasion of our 40th wedding anniversary, so the diamond's value was more sentimental than monetary.

Arriving home, she was determined to look around the house in an effort to recover the lost diamond. She retraced some of the areas where she had dusted and run the sweeper. I told her, "Sweetie, this is like looking for a needle in a hay stack. It will take a miracle to find that diamond (while it was larger than the original, it was not a rock by any stretch of the imagination).

"Well," she said, "We believe in miracles."

We were carefully looking around the computer room, and I had a strange thought, "Go into the master bedroom, and on her side of the bed, look down at your feet." This is precisely what I did, and upon reaching that location, I looked down and there it was! At the top of my voice I called, "Betty, come here. I've found it!"

Excitedly she hurried into our bedroom and seeing the gem that I held in my hand, she hugged me and looking up she said, "Thank you, Lord!"

No one on this earth can convince me that it was a coincidence that I located the "needle in a hay stack." It had to have been the still small voice of the Lord speaking and directing me—it was an act of divine providence. Fortunately, that afternoon when Betty was doing the vacuuming in our bedroom, the sweeper cord was not long enough to reach the very spot where I located her diamond. That was a day I will always remember—not because of the diamond's recovery, but because of the great joy that Betty experienced when that which was lost was found!

In the Gospel of Luke the 15th chapter, we read of a lady who lost one of her ten coins. She lit a candle and

then feverishly swept her house, searching until she found the lost coin. Jesus told that story and He went on to say that finding the lost coin produced an occasion for much rejoicing. This, He said, is the reaction in heaven when a sinner repents.

Both Betty and I were able to sleep much better that night because the "lost had been found." Yes, we did believe in miracles, and we saw one worked out before our very eyes, as we frantically searched for the missing diamond.

A Gift That Keeps Giving

After Bob and Jenny moved into their new home, Betty noticed that they had a nice window (extended) arrangement above the kitchen sink. Through the years she was known for her ability to nurture African violets; Betty had the right touch. Her African violets always looked "alive and well." She decided to give an African violet to Jenny, who appreciated the plant but confessed to lacking a green thumb when it came to the care and nurturing of plants.

Nevertheless, over time the African violet has survived. Some special and amazing developments have occurred regarding this plant which Betty had given to Jennifer. On August 6th of this past year, the plant, which had appeared to be exhausted and practically lifeless, produced a beautiful, purple bloom. (August 6th is the date when Betty and I were married in 1949).

Again a bloom appeared on the day of granddaughter Hannah's birthday; is it surprising that on Saturday, May 19th, the day when we were having the third birthday party for Elizabeth Jean, (the grandchild who is Betty's namesake) the plant, which on Friday appeared to be dormant, presented us with a beautiful purple violet. Betty is no

longer with us in a physical way, but we were reminded that she is with us in spirit, as we looked at that lovely African violet. Can this be coincidence that on those very special and intimate occasions this plant, which Betty gave to Jennifer, bursts forth with beauty and new life? Perhaps one day we shall know what is behind the mystery of this precious African violet—a gift that keeps giving.

The Shepherdess—ready to welcome her family home for Christmas

Our 50th wedding anniversary

10.
I Was Holding Her Hand

In Joy and in Sadness

I was holding her hand the day that we exchanged our marriage vows. I was holding Betty's hand in the delivery room when she gave birth to our first-born child. I was holding her hand on many occasions as we moved through our 54½ years of marriage, and I was holding her hand as she peacefully slipped from us and passed through the valley of the shadow of death.

Ten days earlier (Sunday), Betty awakened after a night of struggling to breathe, and I was instructed by our oncologist to summon the emergency unit and have Betty admitted to the hospital. The doctor made it clear to me that she would not find relief without assistance of the medical people. Difficult though it was for me to do, I called 911 and in a very short time, the ambulance was in our driveway. Those who responded to my call were in every respect professional in the manner in which they met Betty's needs. She was very ill. She was having a very difficult time

breathing. I requested and was permitted to ride in the front seat of the vehicle which transported Betty to Henry County Memorial Hospital.

Upon arrival at the hospital, Betty was immediately placed in an examining area of the emergency room, where she underwent evaluation. It was a distressing time for me. Family members were with me as I stayed by her side, holding her hand. Medication that was administered caused her to become very restless and disoriented. As soon as all the preliminary details were covered and the admitting Emergency Room physician had completed the evaluation, Betty was promptly assigned a room at the hospital. By this time, it was late afternoon. Other family members, having heard about Betty being admitted to the hospital, began to gather.

The room to which she was initially assigned was one of the few that had not yet undergone renovation; consequently, the room was not the most cheerful environment. With us having a large, supportive family, I encouraged a move into a suite-type arrangement and, within two days, Betty was moved to a beautiful, spacious room. This accommodated our family very well but, more importantly, was of great benefit to the patient—Betty.

Betty was hospitalized for six days. During that week, I spent most of my time at her bedside. I was certain that something could be done to relieve her pain and improve her ability to breathe. I wanted to believe that our surgeon, Dr. Richard Strong, could do what he had done eighteen months earlier: remove the fluid from

Betty's lung and restore her to a better quality of life. Dr. Strong informed us of the potentially harmful and painful results if he were to attempt removing the fluid. He advised against it. We trusted his judgment. Twice he had performed surgery on me, and he had done Betty's initial surgery. We knew him to be a man of God. He was as good a general surgeon as one could possibly find. His excellent surgical skills, coupled with his tremendous compassion for people, have given Henry County residents reason to thank God for Dr. Strong's presence in the operating room.

At the time, however, I was caught up in a state of denial. From today's vantage point, I must admit that I was delusional. I wanted desperately to believe that my beloved wife would enter the ranks of cancer survivors.

By Thursday of that week which she spent in the hospital, our family physician began talking about hospice care. I knew what that meant, and I wasn't ready to deal with it. When Betty was sleeping, Thursday afternoon, I slipped over to Forest Ridge to speak with Betty's oncologist. He was not only competent, but his father was my good friend. In fact, when the oncologist's father passed away, the family called on me to preach at his funeral. So Betty and I had a close tie to Dr. Walker, for whom we had great respect both professionally and personally.

Dr. Walker worked me in almost immediately. In his office, I asked him, "Doctor, is it time for us to be talking hospice?" He looked me in the eyes and compassionately said, "Yes."

I felt as if I had been hit by a truck. The time was arriving and I wasn't anywhere near ready to say good-bye to my beloved wife. Surely he was wrong. After all, Betty had just been through a month of radiation and she had been taking chemotherapy, off and on, for more than a year. All of those treatments would, without question, give her another couple of years with me—I thought!

In that small office, in the oncology center, I heard Dr. Walker say, "Yes. Yes it is time to talk about hospice." I was numb. I tearfully shook hands with him and hurried back to the hospital; I could hardly see what was in front of me, the tears were flowing and obstructing my view. I had to hurry back to Betty because I didn't know how long we would have her with us.

Dr. Walker surprised us with a hospital room visit. He took a seat by Betty's bed. He held her hand as he spoke with her. All that I can remember is hearing him say, "The fluid in your lung is the cancer."

Betty replied, "I knew it."

He went on to say, "The pain in your leg—it is the cancer."

Again, Betty replied, "I knew it."

A few minutes later, after speaking a word of comfort to those who were present, Dr. Walker left. The others who were present went into the family gathering area adjacent to Betty's room.

The two of us were alone. Betty looked into my eyes and said, "Well, honey, it looks like the end is near." I held her close to me for a few minutes and together we sobbed.

Unfortunately, at that moment, one of the hospital workers entered the room and announced that she was going to take Betty's blood pressure or whatever else it was that needed to be done. I felt hostile, inwardly, and I wanted to shout, "Leave us alone!" But that would have been unkind, and I left unsaid what I honestly wanted to say.

Friday morning, our family physician came in around noon, and I talked with him about the various programs related to hospice. Betty and I decided on the program with which our physician was affiliated. We had great confidence in our primary physician, Dr. Keith Dinklage; he was the doctor who determined that Betty, indeed, had a problem and it required immediate attention. While he does not spend a lot of time in small talk with his patients, he impressed us as a doctor who genuinely cares about those whom he treats, and he has proven himself to be amazingly accurate when it comes to diagnosing a medical situation.

When we returned to New Castle after being up north for ten years, our New Castle physician had retired and we were unsure whom we should select. Thinking that we couldn't go wrong with any of the family physicians at our local hospital, it was Dr. Dinklage to whom we were assigned. He was very young but it was obvious to us that he was also very bright. What really sold us on him was his caring nature and the fact that he was a man of God. On his white jacket lapel, he displayed the cross; on his professional card he used one of the oldest Christian symbols: the fish. We always felt that with him we were in good hands for our medical services.

Both professionally and personally, we highly respected our physician. He believed that there was nothing more the hospital could do for Betty that couldn't be done at home, so he discharged her on Saturday morning. A hospice representative contacted me, making certain that all was ready for Betty when she arrived home from the hospital. That same afternoon Mary and Len came to spend the weekend with us (sister-in-law and brother-in-law). They were extremely helpful. Having them in the house with me at that particular time was a blessing.

Mary and Len went to the grocery store where they purchased what we needed for our dinner on Sunday; they even prepared the meal. I was a bit nervous regarding Betty's care, so it was helpful to have them there to assure me that I was doing exactly what needed to be done.

On Sunday it was obvious that Betty's condition was quickly deteriorating. Her Uncle Ed, who was eighty-three years old, drove alone from Illinois to New Castle, Indiana—a three hour drive—to see his beloved niece. This he did just a few days before Betty passed away. Other family members from Illinois came that weekend to visit with her and to tell Betty how much she meant to them.

She Was Not Alone

Our children and grandchildren began arriving at our home on Sunday. They kept the vigil, throughout Monday, Tuesday, and into Wednesday. Our son Ron administered the injection of pain medicine to Betty during those critical days, having been instructed by the hospice nurse. With his skill and experience in the field of medicine, not much instruction was necessary.

A hospital bed had been set up in the family room for Betty. When she was alert, she was able to hear the family as they conversed, and she heard them in their moments of laughter. Betty was never happier than on those occasions when the chatter and laughter of family resounded in our home. Taking turns, various family members would go into the family room for a few minutes to be with Betty. Renee, our daughter-in-law, went to the store and purchased a curtain rod which was used to ensure that when needed, Betty could have some privacy. The rod and curtain were suspended across the opening between the dining and family rooms.

Tuesday evening, while she was still relatively alert, Bobby played the organ, which was located in the living room. The family was gathered in the room with Betty; we

sang hymns, read Scripture, and said prayers. Some family members went home for the night, but those who remained found a place to lay their heads and catch whatever sleep they could. My recliner was by Betty's bed, so I was able to hold her hand throughout the night. When we awakened on Wednesday (Ash Wednesday), the first day of the Lenten Season, Betty was no longer responding to the degree that she had on Tuesday.

At noon the hospice caregivers arrived and gave Betty a bath. It was about five or five-thirty that I sensed her time to leave us was nearing. At approximately ten to seven, I was in the kitchen talking with neighbors who live across the street. One of my children came to me and said, "Dad, Mother is calling for you." Immediately I went to her bedside to assure her that I was there by her side. About seven-fifteen in the evening, I asked each of the four children and their spouses to speak a few words to Mother; then the grandchildren and great-grandchildren said their goodbyes to a grandmother who dearly loved them.

The family then encircled her bed; it was about seven forty-five when I read selected verses of Proverbs 31:10-31. Then I led the family in prayer. Together—without benefit of the organ—we sang the hymn, "Abide With Me." As we sang the grandfather clock was striking eight times.

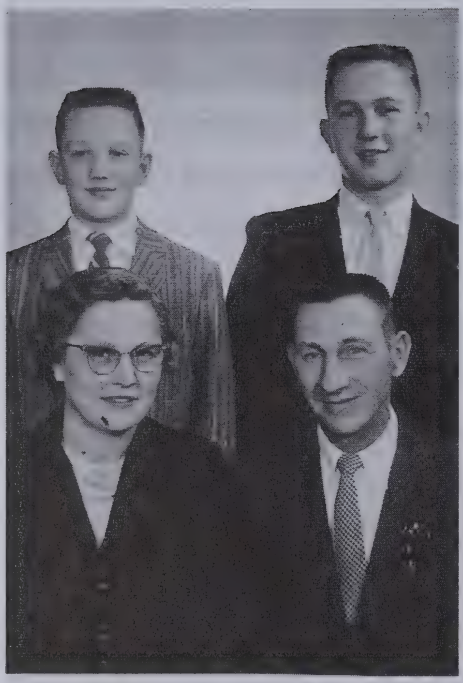
After we finished singing, I traced on Betty's forehead the sign of the cross and spoke the words used at Christian baptism, "Betty Jean Keith Hobby, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever."

It was about three minutes after eight that I again took her hand as I sat at her side. Two minutes later, she slipped quickly and peacefully from this life. I was blessed to be by her side in those closing minutes; I was holding her hand, supported by my family who was there and who also witnessed her passing.

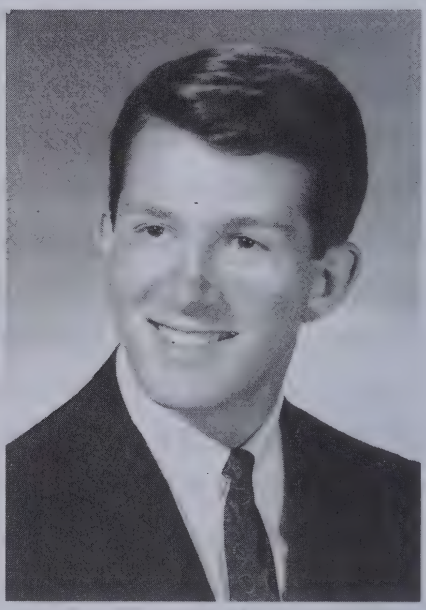
A note of interest: Later that evening, when our pastor was with us, he told us that our congregation was singing its closing Ash Wednesday hymn at 8 p.m. The hymn? "Abide With Me." When Bob talked to his associate in Ft. Wayne, he was told that Trinity English Lutheran Church congregation—at its Ash Wednesday evening service—was singing its closing hymn "Abide With Me" at 8 p.m. At the Hobby residence, our family at 8 p.m., surrounding Betty's bed, sang the hymn "Abide With Me." Was all of this just a coincidence? I don't think so; I believe that it was providence.

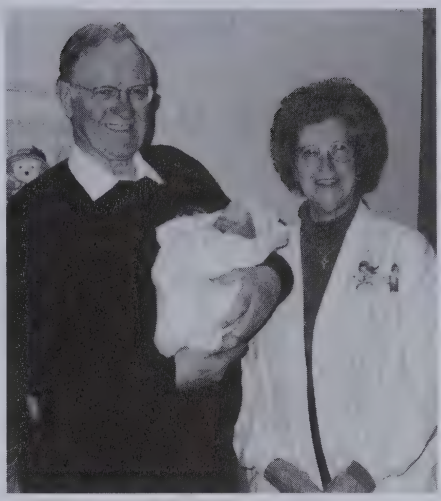
Henry F. Lyte (1793-1847) penned these words:

Hold Thou thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heav'ns morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.



Faith and Family





Seasons of Blessing

Service Participants

Presider
Rev. Dr. James Stuck

Liturgist
Rev. Dr. Ralph Kempski

Preacher
Rev. Jeffery Gramza

Director/Organist
Robert Hobby

Assisting Music Directors
Angela Rodgers
Jeremy Bankson

Eulogy
Dr. Joseph Brechbill

Lectors
Rev. Gene Templar
Rev. David Livingston

Choirs
Holy Trinity Chancel Choir, New Castle
Trinity English Chancel Choir, Fort Wayne

Trumpeters
Daniel Ross
Robert Wood

Crucifer
Joshua Jenkins

Acolytes
Derrick Allen
Ross Allen

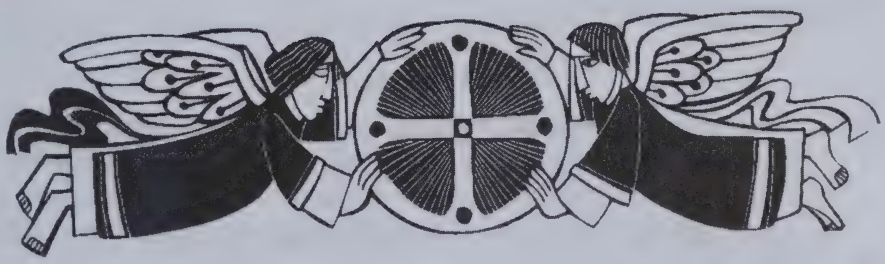
Communion Assistants
David Solida
Rev. Mark Strietelmeier

Ushers
Robert Knarr
Dr. Lindsey Rolsten
Bradley Salyer
Chad Salyer

Pall Bearers
(Grandchildren)
Steven Hobby
Jennifer Geisting
James Hobby
Christopher Huntley
Kevin Perry
Amy Arndt
Curtis Huntley
Hannah Hobby
Lydia Hobby

Vocal Trio
Doreen Muntzinger
Ann Retlenmaier
Julie Wood

11.
A Celebration of Life



✝Celebration of Life✝

FOR

Betty Jean Hobby

February 5th, 1928— February 25th, 2004

PRELUDE

Children of the Heavenly Father	Robert A. Hobby
Lord, Thou Hast Been Our Refuge	Andrew Carter
Lord, It Belongs Not to My Care	Carl Schalk
Arioso	J.S. Bach
Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	J.S. Bach
My Spirit Be Joyful	J.S. Bach
Lift Thine Eyes	Felix Mendelssohn
Beautiful Savior	Robert A. Hobby

At the entrance of the church

GREETING

℗ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all mercy and the God of all consolation. He comforts us in all our sorrows so that we can comfort others in their sorrows with the consolation we ourselves have received from God.

℃ **Thanks be to God.**

℗ When we were baptized in Christ Jesus, we were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by Baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

PROCESSION

The congregation will please stand
(next page)

Material Used In The Celebration of Life Service

The Music

The Processional Hymn: *For All The Saints*

The Psalm Hymn: *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

The Gospel Verse: *Come to Me* Robert A. Hobby

Hymn Of The Day: *Abide With Me* Arr. Robert A. Hobby

Choir: *E'ven So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come* Paul Manz

Communion Distribution

Congregational Hymn: *This Is My Father's World*

Choir Anthem: *Amazing Grace* Jean Anne Shafferman

Congregational Hymn: *Shall We Gather at the River*
Arr. Robert A. Hobby

Post-Communion Hymn: *Now Thank We All Our God*

Choir Anthem: *Lux Aeterna* John Rutter
(Soloist: Kristin Dausch)

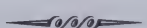
Recessional

Choir: *Break Forth, O Beauteous, Heavenly Light* J.S. Bach

Postlude *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* Robert A. Hobby

Liturgy Used: *Lutheran Book of Worship*
Burial of the Dead

In Memoriam



The viewing for those who wanted to express condolences to Betty's family was scheduled on Sunday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., and the service was to begin at 7 p.m. Both were scheduled to be held at the First Christian Church in New Castle because of two reasons:

(a) We knew that our own church facilities were not large enough to facilitate all who would attend the viewing and/or the Memorial Service.

(b) The First Christian Church has a spacious sanctuary and a large church parlor. The plan was to have the viewing in the church parlor and then transition to the sanctuary for the Celebration of Betty's Life, which would begin at 7 p.m.

Our plan was prudent. There were over a thousand who turned out for the viewing and/or the evening service. In fact, the viewing was scheduled for 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., but the press of people was so great and the line so long that the

viewing had to be closed at ten minutes to seven. The funeral home director, Sam Hall, guided those in line to the sanctuary for seating. This meant that the family had no time to eat prior to the Memorial Service. The day was a wonderful tribute to Betty. The outpouring of love was absolutely overwhelming. There was representation from the various congregations that, through the years, we had served.

The service was comforting and inspiring. All who participated in leadership roles are listed in the introduction to this section. Our son Bob was the organist for the service and he directed the combined choirs of both Holy Trinity, New Castle, and Trinity English, Ft. Wayne (the latter chartered a bus so that they, too, could participate—a comforting gift of love). Brass players came from Ft. Wayne and Indianapolis. Our Bishop Emeritus and his wife (Rev. Dr. Ralph and Mary Kempski) had just arrived at their home on Saturday evening, from a trip, but generously drove from southern Indiana to participate in the service.

Dr. Joseph Brechbill and his wife Lois had plans to leave for a Florida vacation the morning following Betty's death, but they lovingly put off their departure for Florida and, instead, drove from central Pennsylvania to New Castle, Indiana, to be with us. Dr. Brechbill delivered the Euology. Joe and Lois have been close friends for many years, and when we traveled to the "Sweetest Place on Earth" (Hershey, Pennsylvania), the Brechbill residence had become home base for us. Joe and I have much in common. Betty always felt comfortable and warmly welcomed in the

Brechbill's home; she held Lois in high regard and enjoyed the time that the two of them spent together.

There were many other people who went the extra mile to express their love to our grieving family. What a wonderful tribute to Betty. After the Memorial Service Betty's body was taken to our home church, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, where her body lay in state in the chancel overnight. The next morning, family and friends filled our church for a prayer service, after which we processed to the cemetery for the interment. The grandchildren served as casket bearers: four on either side and the youngest on the end.

OBITUARY

Betty Jean Keith Hobby

A Lutheran service for burial for Betty Jean Keith Hobby will be held 7 p.m. Sunday with pre-service music beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church of New Castle. Mrs. Hobby, 76, of New Castle died Wednesday at her home following a lengthy battle with cancer.

She graduated from Fisher (Illinois) High School. In high school, she participated in the band and choral programs. She was a church organist and a teacher of piano. She married her husband, Sgt. Clark E. Hobby of the U.S. Air Force Aug. 6, 1949, in Rantoul, Ill., in the American Lutheran Church. With her family, she moved to Indiana in January of 1960. In her church, she served as an organist, Sunday school teacher, vacation Bible school teacher and was an active participant in the women's organizations. Mrs. Hobby shared with her husband in ministry, serving church congregations in Indianapolis, Connersville, Auburn, New Castle and Columbia. She was born Feb. 5, 1928, in Champaign County, a daughter of Robert and Ethel Sepp Keith.

She is survived by her husband of 54 1/2 years, the Rev. Dr. Clark E. Hobby; four children, Janet (husband: James) Perry of Connersville, Ronald (wife: Renee) Hobby of Noblesville, Linda (husband: Roger) Huntley of New Castle, Robert (wife: Jennifer) Hobby of Fort Wayne; nine grandchildren, Steven (wife: Florence) Hobby of LaPorte, Jennifer (husband: Jeff) Giesting of Fishers, Christopher (wife: Shannon) Huntley of New Castle, James Hobby of Fishers, Curtis Huntley of New Castle, Amy (husband: Glenn) Arndt of Greenfield, Kevin (wife: Michelle) of Liberty and Hannah and Lydia Hobby of Fort Wayne; two stepgrandsons, Brad and Chad Salyer of Noblesville; 10 great-grandchildren, Montana and Emma Hobby of LaPorte, Regan and Mitchel Giesting of Fishers, Jordan Huntley of Pekin and Bryce and Rylan Huntley of New Castle, Caroline and Adam Arndt of Greenfield and Haylee Perry of Liberty.

In addition to her parents and grandparents, she was preceded in death by her brothers, Dale and Donald Keith of Fisher, Ill.

The Lutheran Service for Burial will include choirs from Holy Trinity Lutheran of New Castle and Trinity English Lutheran of Fort Wayne. Friends may call from 2:30-5:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church of New Castle, 2000 Bundy Ave., with visitation following the service. A Prayer Service will be held 10 a.m. Monday at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church with burial following at South Mound Cemetery. Bishop James Stuck will be the presiding minister and Bishop Emeritus Ralph Kempski will be the liturgist at the Sunday evening service along with the Rev. Jeffrey Gramza and other assisting clergy. Memorial contributions may be made to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 535 S. 14th St., New Castle. Macer-Hall Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Feb. 25, 2004

Betty with her husband and her four children (also their spouses) whom she loved and to whom she was deeply devoted.

We prayed fervently that she would win her battle with cancer. With St. Paul she said, "To live is Christ and to die is gain." Either way she was a winner!

The church where the Sunday evening memorial service was held

Our home church—Betty's body lay in state in the chancel Sunday night. A prayer service was held Monday morning, prior to interment (South Mound Cemetery).

Eulogy

It is with a sense of deep loss that we have gathered here in this place to honor the life of Betty Hobby, a fellow traveler on the journey of faith and one who lived among us and walked with us these past seventy-six years. We all feel that loss, but none as deeply as those who knew her as a mother and Clark who knew her as one who could be counted on to offer unconditional support and wise counsel in times of decision.

Betty Hobby was a devoted wife who maintained her identity as an individual with strong convictions and purposeful living while at the same time sharing a life with an unusual man of God. She did not hide the light that God gave her under a bushel but held it high alongside the light God had given her husband Clark so that together a stronger light shone, lighting the way for many who were finding it difficult to see the path ahead. For 54½ years Betty's light shone with that of Clark's in Christian service.

Betty was especially proud of the four children: Janet, Ronald, Linda, and Robert. She fussed over them and admonished them to do their best always. After all, they were the preacher's kids. Betty's face would always light up when she talked with others about them. Although the

expectations were high, the children knew the high standards set by their parents were just another indication of their love for them, and nothing would be acceptable to Betty or Clark but that they honestly tried to meet the standard and thereby contribute to the family's reputation as Christians in the community. Betty's love and high expectations extended to the grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well. However, the children claimed that she was a bit more understanding with the grandchildren than had been their experience.

Betty's love for Clark knew no bounds. She gave support in little as well as in matters of great family importance. She always wanted Clark to look his best. She would check his clothing and his clerical dress before services in which he participated. Sometimes she listened to Clark as he tested out his remarks on one who would provide an honest opinion. There were other ways her support was demonstrated. One was to invite the wives of new residents to the community to a coffee or tea she would host in the Hobby home where the newcomers could meet other ladies of the church and be invited to worship with their newfound acquaintances.

No one will ever know the many things Betty Hobby did to promote the happiness and well-being of others. She did not seek applause or recognition. Betty was just doing what every viable Christian should be doing. Yes, she was concerned about the physical and emotional well-being of others, but she was more concerned about the development of their faith in a God who loved them and cared for them

as His children. This was the end toward which she worked with the bright light of her example.

Many of you knew Betty Hobby longer than I was privileged to know her, but whether we knew her as a personal friend, colleague, neighbor, teacher, an organist, a choir director, an activist for a better community, or as a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother or as the minister's wife, we all sensed a special person whom God had placed on this earth for a very special purpose. That purpose was to enrich the life of all, who were privileged to come within the sphere of her influence. Betty had that special gift to see beyond the obvious and identify the needs and hidden loneliness in others that many times went beyond one's ability to express in words. Her gentle spirit and empathy reached out to all whether they were friends or just another member of the human race. Her life was modeled after the life of Christ, her Savior, as she strove to emulate God's love for all mankind. She shared her love for the Lord with her husband Clark as they served together in ministry not only to the members of the congregations to which they were called, but to all they contacted as they went about spreading the Good News of the Gospel of Christ.

Betty and Clark made many trips to Pennsylvania to a town where Clark grew up as a student in the Milton Hershey School. Betty and Clark would stay at our home. In fact, we have "The Hobby Suite," as they called it, in our home. It was during those visits that we learned to know Betty and quickly learned of her ways in guiding a sometimes overly enthusiastic husband as he wanted her to

experience everything about Hershey that he remembered as he was growing up.

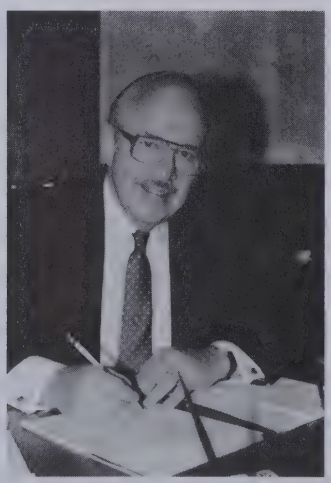
In our home are a number of remembrances of their visits with us. None are more precious or more symbolic of Betty's life and witness than the angel figures she would bring to grace the appointments in our home. One in particular, a large angel in white on a pedestal, occupies a prominent place in our home. Another angel, the angel Gabriel, overlooks a small choir of angels. As Lois and I got to know Betty better, we gained in our understanding of what it was she was trying to convey to us. It was her way of reminding us that God has his angels to watch over us, to protect us and walk with us as we travel this earth and continue our walk of faith. With each passing year, and especially now, those symbolic figures have taken on new meaning, and we have come to realize that Betty and Clark not only brought an image of an angel to our home to remind us of God's love, Betty was indeed a personification of an angel in our midst.

Yes, we will miss the physical presence of Betty. The sense of calmness she gave to those who were in her presence, her humility of spirit, her humor and ability to take the positive view of things even when obscure to everyone around her—these things we will miss. It was her selflessness when acquainted with the needs of others, her genuine love not only for her family, her church, and those she knew, but also for all mankind that conveyed God's love for all. However, her greatest love, and the love that sustained her in her time of greatest need, was her love for

a heavenly Father to whose home she has gone and is now resting in peace.

So we rejoice and celebrate this evening Betty's life lived among us. We see the light she held high as it still shines brightly illuminating the way for us all. There is no doubt that Betty has joined that choir of angels and is at this moment singing with a new voice and rejoicing in her freedom from all earthly pain. Betty is eagerly awaiting the time of reunion when we shall join her in her heavenly home. We take comfort tonight in the knowledge that, "Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal."

Prepared and delivered by Dr. Joseph A. Brechbill
February 29, 2004



Janet Beth—Child #1

Protecting the Christmas tree—Janet and Ronald

The wife of James

Janet a flower girl at a wedding

Reflections From Betty's Children

Janet:

I have many wonderful memories of my mother. It wasn't difficult for me to decide which of them I especially wanted to share. My sister and brothers and I were blessed to have a wonderful, loving mother. She always had time for her children, regardless of her schedule or where she might be. If she was needed, she was ready to respond to the call.

Mother was a worker, never running out of something to do. The first time that she met my husband, was at our house on Tulip Lane. Jim and I had just started dating. He was on our property no more than ten minutes when he rolled up his sleeves and was ready to lend a hand with our project of erecting a basketball goal. Mom's comment was, "He's energetic. We'll enjoy his help around our house." Over the years, Mom and Dad depended on Jim to install, repair, or do whatever needed doing. When something in their house went on "the blink," Mom would say, "Let's call Jim and ask what he thinks we should do." He became a valued resource not only for Mom and Dad, but for nearly all members of the family.

Knowing that many of our experiences, "All in the family," would be recorded by my father, I decided to put into writing an incredible experience that I will never forget and will always hold close to my heart; it was embedded in something that just Mother and I shared.

The last four or five years of her life, we had our "Morning Coffee" at 6 a.m. It didn't really matter whether we were together—in person—or separated by many miles. The phone call would last from three minutes to thirty minutes, depending on the day and scheduled events. Sometimes we had a lot to talk about and other times it was just, "I hope you have a good day and I love you." This time was very special and precious to me, and I know that it was for her as well.

The last day of her life (Ash Wednesday) was not any different for me. The family knew that Mother's life with us here was soon coming to an end, but I felt it was very important for me as well as for her to have our last coffee talk at 6 a.m. on that Wednesday, February 25th, 2007. I sat beside her bed, and I had my last cup of coffee with my mother. Of course, I did all the talking, but I know that she was listening to everything I had to say. I ended the talk with the usual, "I love you."

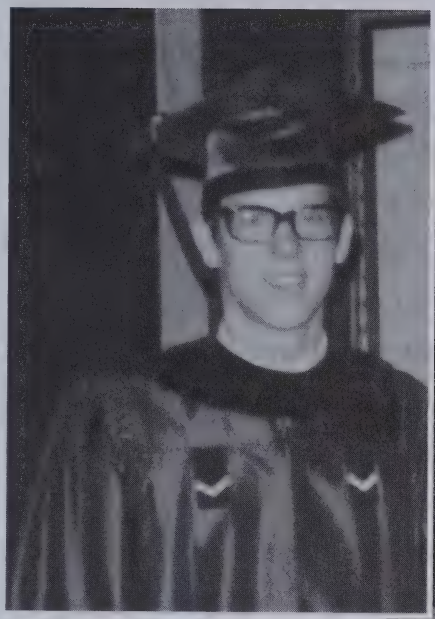
The next several weeks were painful as I would look at the clock and know the phone would not ring and that I would not be calling her to wish her a good day.

One morning as I was getting ready for work, instead of turning on the television, I turned on the CD player and thought that I would listen to some music. I grabbed a CD

which happened to be the group ABBA. I turned the music up so that I could listen as I drank my second coffee; I proceeded with details related to getting ready for the day's activities. The song, "I Believe in Angels" began to play, and for a moment I just stood there and listened intently. For a reason unknown to me, I looked down at the cup of instant coffee that I was holding and which I had just finished making, and the creamy foam started to separate and a big smile formed in the cup. I was in shock! My first impulse was to run and get the camera so that I could show my family the smile which appeared in the coffee, but then I stopped and I realized that this was a special moment for just Mother and me. I believe that she and I had coffee together again that morning.

I loved my mother and I will always miss her, but I find consolation in knowing that she is free: free from the pain which she silently endured and free from the illness which she so bravely battled. She loved the Lord and she loved her family. That is what none of us in the family will ever forget.

Ronald Clark—Child #2



Son Ronald escorts his mother at Robert's wedding— the husband of Renée

Linda and Robert admire the college graduate— "big brother" Ronald

Ronald:

When Dad requested that I prepare a couple of paragraphs of memories of Mother, the first thoughts that entered my mind were of the roles which my mother fulfilled as I grew up. She accomplished, very well, so many roles, I must limit myself to just a few.

Protector: As a young child, living in Illinois and Indiana, I was aware that mother kept a close eye on weather patterns; she was especially alert when it came to electric storms and warnings about the possibility of tornadoes. Sometimes it was during the day and other times it was in the darkness of night that she would gather us kids, and we would retreat to the safety of our basement because a severe storm was imminent.

Although she was obviously concerned about the weather conditions, she remained calm, assuring us that everything would be fine. As an adult, I believe my mother's protective ways and her ability to remain calm in the midst of a storm rubbed off on me. My current home has a basement, and if a severe storm or tornado warning is sounded, I find it a source of comfort to know that I can lead my family to the safety of the basement; in fact, I even invite my "basementless" neighbors to join us in this safe haven. At such times, I remember my mother's strength and her calm ways in similar circumstances back in the days of my childhood. The question I once asked her, and something that I always wondered growing up was this: "Why didn't Dad have to get out of bed and join us in the basement?"

Navigator: My mother was always the navigator for my father when taking trips in the automobile. In the planning stages of an upcoming trip, Mother would pull out the large road atlas and begin mapping the best route. In 1991 I began a career in medical sales which requires many road trips. One or two days before a scheduled trip, mother would call me. She was interested in knowing which routes that I would be taking to reach my destination. On many occasions I would indicate that I hadn't had time to even consider which routes I would be traveling. She would then provide some great suggestions related to saving me time on the road. My wife Renee commented on numerous occasions that my mother had no peer when it came to selecting the routes which would best get one to and from a specific destination.

Knowing what a loss it is to our father, no longer having Mother to assist him with directions, the four of us kids and their spouses gifted Dad with a portable GPS (navigating system for his automobile). The GPS is really helpful but nothing can replace hearing Mother say, ". . . Clark, you missed your turn."

Hard Worker: My parents were great role models. As I grew from childhood into adolescence and then moved into adulthood, I was blessed to have a mother and father who were tremendous examples for me. My strong work ethic I owe to them. My mother was a farm girl and she knew what physical work was all about and she enjoyed many of the tasks that she was called upon to assume. Although unable to lift heavy objects, she was always present

when a family member was moving from one location to another. Mother knew how to efficiently pack boxes, and she prudently labeled the boxes making clear from which room the boxes' contents came and to which room they would go in the new house or apartment.

One year when my younger son Jim was moving to Penn State University located at State College, Pennsylvania, my mother unhesitantly offered her services. She rode the entire distance, sitting in the back seat of the truck that we had carefully packed. Several times we suggested switching the seating arrangement, but she insisted that she was doing just fine. On the road we enjoyed visiting with her, and when we heard her humming in the back seat, we knew she was enjoying the road trip. We also knew that she derived great satisfaction out of having a part in all that was involved in the relocation of her grandson.

Faithful Servant: Being the wife of a pastor is a calling of the Lord. My mother was very involved with my father's ministry, demonstrated by her willingness to support him with a number of moves (from one parish to another), using her gift of music to play the piano for worship services and other occasions, and taking care of us kids most evenings while Dad was out calling in homes. In all the years that I was living at home, my memories of Mother can nicely be summed up like this: she was a loving, caring wife, a devoted mother and, most of all, she loved Jesus and faithfully served Him.

On February 29th, 2004, (Mother and I shared the same birth month) we celebrated her life and love. I carry

in my Bible the program from that memorial service—her picture is on the cover. Each time that I open my Bible, I have an inward assurance that Mother is now safe in the arms of Jesus; He took one of His children home as He promised. I live with hope as I look forward to that glorious day in heaven when I will join all the family members who have professed Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Linda Kay—Child #3

The epitome of compassion

The wife of Roger

Linda on a trip with Dad

Linda:

When my mom passed away, I was 50½ years of age. Except for eleven of those years, I lived in the same community as my parents. As I write these fond memories, my mind is flooded with thoughts of memories of Mom.

I was five years old when I experienced my first separation from Mom; it was in 1958 and the occasion was my first day in kindergarten. We lived in the small village of Foosland (Illinois), and I was bused about eight miles to a town by the name of Gibson City. Betty's baby not only went to school, but the school was miles from home. I was the first of our family to attend kindergarten. At this point in time, kindergarten was just getting its start in the public educational system. Mom was always there waiting on the bus that would return me to the village where we lived. She was there eager to hug and to kiss me.

When I was nine years old, I was very proud to walk beside my mom. No matter where we went I was proud to be by her side because she was expecting "our" baby (I was the baby in the family for nine years).

During those years that we were separated (living in different communities), Mom always assured me that she was just a phone call away. She seemed to intuitively know when I needed her, because at such times, she would call me on the phone or surprise me with a visit for the day.

Mom and I served as codirectors for our church's summer Bible School, and we stood side by side blending our alto voices with others in the church choir. We even

enrolled in the YMCA aerobic classes, which she enjoyed but there were times when she had to take time out. Years later, the two of us became Beanie Babies collectors. Often we would stand in line and wait for what seemed like hours to add to our collection. Sometimes the waiting was in the rain, but in the end we thought that the wait was worth it.

When Roger was severely injured in an industrial accident, Mom was there for us. We jokingly referred to her as Roger's personal nurse. She bought a notebook in which she recorded Roger's caloric intake. If you have ever been in a burn unit of a hospital, you know what a depressing place it is. Mom and I had an experience about which we got a good chuckle. We stepped off of the elevator at the hospital one day, and we were headed for what we thought was Roger's room. A man came running toward us, informing us that we were on the wrong floor. He said, "This is the hospital's morgue." Hurriedly, we got back into the elevator and pushed the button for the floor where Roger's room was located.

During Roger's rehabilitation, he and Mom worked on jigsaw puzzles. One of the puzzles she glued and framed. Mom and Roger developed a very special relationship; she took care of him in the same way, and with the same intensity of love, that she would her own sons.

The day Mom learned that Grandma Keith had fallen and broken her hip, she quickly packed a suitcase and took off for Illinois. Jan and I decided that we, too, should go over to Illinois and show support for Mom in this situation. When we finally arrived at the hospital, the end of visiting

hours was being announced. We started toward the entrance when there before our eyes was Mother. She looked exhausted. She looked at us and turned away; then she looked at us again and then recognized us. She ran to us, embraced us, and said over and over, "My girls." We hugged and cried together. Then we took Mom to get something to eat. I recall how she delighted in having some of her favorite chocolate cobbler.

Five months before we knew that she had cancer, Mom, Dad, Roger, and I took a trip to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. We had a wonderful time; Mom and Roger walked for miles along the shore looking for exotic shells. We all had our coffee on the balcony which overlooked the ocean.

Since Bob's girls are the same ages as my grandsons, mother and daughter were able to take their grandchildren on outings. We went to the zoo, to parks, and to Chuck E. Cheese's. On one memorable occasion, we came across a beautiful scene. There were sailboats out on a large body of water. Ducks floating around added to the magnificent scene. Later we learned that it was Prairie Creek. The last Labor Day that Mom was with us, we decided to take a drive. Mom wanted to share the view with Dad and Roger. Before we headed home, Mom thought we should have a hot fudge sundae.

In the wee hours of February 25th, Ash Wednesday, I sat by her bed, holding her hand, and talked to her about the wonderful tradition that she established when she took my sons, her grandchildren, and great-grandchildren to Memorial Park to feed the ducks. We spent a lot of time and

bought a lot of bread to feed the duck population there at the park.

My heart aches every day for her. I know that she is watching over us. I often reflect on those special memories and the wonderful love that our family has shared.

Robert Andrew—Child #4

Graduation for the master musician, Notre Dame University

Robert's mother proudly turned pages for her son.

Robert:

It is a challenge to pay sufficient homage in several typed pages to my mother, who was such a pillar of support on so many layers of my life. Perhaps it was easier to share my inner-most feelings through musical notes—a process that led to the creation of a major choral/orchestral work, *The Good Shepherd*, honoring Mom's memory. For me it was a means of working through my personal grief, and it now enables me to celebrate her life rather than mourning her death. Thus, it is in the spirit of celebration that I share a few memories.

First, I would like to acknowledge the support and encouragement that Mom provided to me through my early years of musical training and, later, during my professional career. From second grade through my senior year of high school, Mom faithfully transported me from school to piano and/or organ lessons; later, she would provide the ride home. Rarely was there an occasion when the journey wasn't accompanied by a snack of some type and, generally, it was a favored one by this writer.

The rides provided opportunity for conversation of all types. But even in the lightest of conversational topics, it was evident that Mom was interested in my life, my schoolwork, and my musical training. Just during the course of this past year, I have had several chances to drive my children to their piano lessons. And, while awaiting the conclusion of the lessons in the occasionally warm car, I have gained a much deeper appreciation for Mom's sacrifice.

She had sat countless hours in her car through the entire duration of my lessons, entertaining herself with crossword puzzles and observing people. Regardless of temperature or lesson length, never did complaint sound from her lips. She would demonstrate the same loyalty during college and professional days, too, always striving to literally and figuratively go the extra mile to support my work.

Second, I think it is fair to admit (something certainly acknowledged by my siblings) that as the baby of the family, I was generally spoiled. I would like to think that it was not a bad thing, but there is no doubt that Mom wanted to make sure that her "little boy" was taken care of. Through several moves that I made, she was very content to manage the event, ensuring that the new destination had her approval before she left the premises. This included painting walls, lining countless kitchen drawers and cabinets with shelf paper, organizing the linen closet, moving furniture, scrubbing floors and tubs, and having a large pot of chili on the stove for break time. I suppose that many adults would prefer to oversee their own moves, but I was always grateful for Mom's touch. In a similar manner, Mom always worried about my lack of concern and detail for the ledger in the checkbook (obviously a trait I inherited from my father). In fact, my attitude of "if I don't know how much is in the account, I won't spend it" drove her nuts. Imagine my delight in graduate school, after relinquishing control of the books to Mom, that I experienced my first insufficient funds notice. She responded by returning control to me, paying the service fee, and bracing

herself for the heckling she would receive from her "little one."

Third, I would be remiss if I did not mention her role as mother-in-law and grandmother. From the beginning of their relationship, Mom was gracious and loving to my wife Jenny. To a certain extent, they shared one big thing in common—they anchored the home and the children, while their husbands were out and about dealing with the lives of everyone else. Jenny admired Mom's loyalty to family and her quiet strength at home, and she definitely enjoyed the humorous ways in which Mom could bring Dad in line—a tradition that she seeks to carry on in our relationship. As with each of her grandchildren, Mom always took such special interest in our girls. Her face lit up every time she was with them, and I can recall her smile and wave up until the last visible moments in our departures. My only lament is that our daughters' time with Mom was so limited. Nevertheless, her presence is still evident in our home through pictures, gifts, videos, and prayers. (Who says you can't ask God to bless people in heaven?)

Finally, if I had to isolate one poignant memory that I shared with Mom, it might have been one that occurred while she was in the hospital. It was near the end of her journey, and I volunteered to spend the night with her, enabling Dad and others who were weary the luxury of being at home. Around 11 p.m. (long after Mom usually went to bed) we were both awake. So we chatted a bit, discussing the anticipated birth of Jenny's and my third daughter, whose arrival was scheduled about three months

from then. During the course of the conversation, Mom shared her predictions of the baby's size, hair color, eyes, and personality. It was at that moment, in the stillness of night, that I broached a subject that until then had not directly been on the table for discussion—her imminent death. In some ways it was a conversation with few words, in other ways, much was communicated.

I have heard and read that it is much easier for a person facing his or her death if they receive permission from the family to "let go." Granting her that permission was very difficult for me to do because 1) I selfishly did not want to lose Mom, 2) being the first to do so might betray my other family members, 3) it was hard to imagine Mom not being present for the birth of our baby. Although she had never said it, I knew Mom's goal was to live long enough to see our third child. The pain, however, was growing more severe; the hope of full recovery was not possible; and the tests to measure her "success" were becoming more uncomfortable and undesirable for her. So I took a deep breath and told her that if she could not make it to May, I would not be angry with her. She replied, "I know you won't. And you know I will still be with you . . . in other ways, don't you?"

"Yes, I know, Mom." That was the end of the conversation.

Just days later we saw Mom (then at home in New Castle) in what would be our last visit with her in a coherent state of mind. It provided us the opportunity to tell her that her new granddaughter would bear her name. The news was greeted with both humility and all the show of appreciation

that she could muster. As our dreaded moment of departure to Fort Wayne beckoned, she bid Jenny and the girls farewell. Then, after kisses and hugs and the meaningful exchanges of "I love you," she pulled me down to her once more and whispered, "Don't forget what we talked about." At first I didn't know what she meant. Later, in the van, I realized that she was referring to the promise she had made to me at the hospital. Three months to the day and almost exactly to the hour of Mom's death, Elizabeth Jean came into the world—even fulfilling most of Mom's predictions.

Having heard Mom's story during labor, the attending nurse held the baby and said, "I do believe your mother has been present with you."

I am fascinated that while the pain of my grief has faded a bit, memories have surfaced from down deep in my soul—memories that are full of joy and meaningfulness. Sometimes unexpected, they take me on a journey not traveled for many years. And as I revisit those special snapshots from earlier days, I can't help but give thanks for having two incredible, loving parents—one of whom I eagerly await to see on the other side.

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Robert's Special Tribute To His Mother

In the spring of 2006, Robert completed a major work, which he composed in memory of his mother. He titled it, *The Good Shepherd*. The first performance was on

March 19, 2006, and he directed it resplendent with orchestra, The Chancel, Youth, and Junior choirs of Trinity English Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Todd Samara was the soloist. It was so well received that at its conclusion there wasn't a dry eye in the audience.

Excerpts from the Composer's Reflections:

"During life's journey one is presented with opportunities to travel new paths—opportunities that stir up intrigue and fear at the same time. Undertaking the task of writing *The Good Shepherd* has been no exception, taking me spiritually and musically to places never visited before.

"*The Good Shepherd* was written to honor the memory of my mother, Betty Hobby, who, after having fought a valiant battle against cancer, joined The Church Triumphant on Ash Wednesday, 2004. Rather than writing a Requiem (Mass for the Dead) to honor her memory, I opted to write a work that might offer a 'brighter' tone of encouragement and hope to those still on this earthly pilgrimage. In order to accomplish that goal, the work highlights that intimate relationship between God, the Good Shepherd, and God's sheep/humanity.

". . . May The Good Shepherd honor my mother who was both a dedicated lamb and a shepherdess, quietly seeking to help others on behalf of the kingdom. More importantly, may it bring honor and glory to the One in whom she lived, died, and with whom she now fully realizes the reward of God's infinite love."

(Robert's composition has been published by
Morning Star, St. Louis, Missouri.)

Clark's family: Audrey, Betty, and Eva
Clark, Albert, and Andrew

The day Clark received his doctorate:
Jack, Minerva, Eva, and Andrew
Betty, Clark, Mom Keith, Dale, and Albert

12.
Thoughtful Expressions

Sisters-In-Law Share Memories

Eva Andersen Barker

In loving tribute:

Eva is Clark's sister. She was Betty's sister-in-law for 54½ years. Often she visited in our home and often we were her guests. In our early years of marriage, vacations for Betty and me were a Pennsylvania visit to my siblings; Eva knew Betty very well through our visits, through correspondence, and an occasional telephone conversation. So Eva shares these words of remembrance and affection.

"Betty was someone you would enjoy knowing. She was a preacher's wife who attended most of the ladies' meetings. When I was visiting Betty, I just naturally accompanied her to meetings, at which time I met a lot of really nice people.

"On one of my visits to their home, I went to choir practice with Betty and then, of course, on Sunday morning I got to sing in their church choir alongside of Betty.

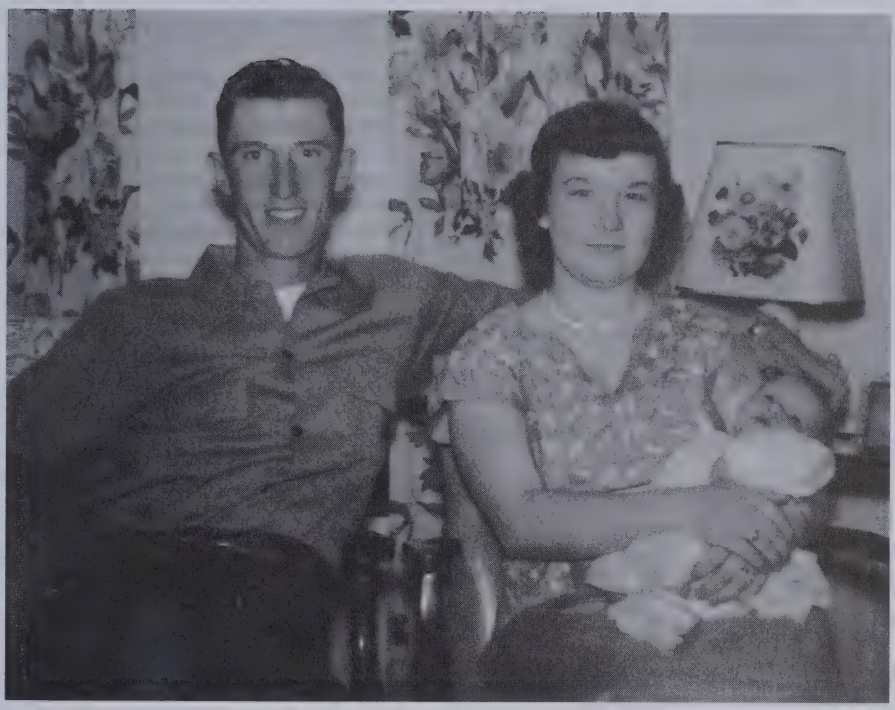
"I remember that the many trips we made to visit with Betty and Clark required many hours on the road (it was even further when they lived in Illinois), but when we pulled into their driveway, there was Betty—all smiles and with hugs and kisses, making the road trip all worthwhile.

"I will never forget that Betty's favorite place which we visited each evening was the Dairy Queen for a hot fudge sundae. It was fun and it made a happy ending to that particular day. There were special occasions when we would be alone and have opportunity to engage in 'women talk.' Those were moments that just she and I shared and the memory of them brings tears to my eyes.

"I treasure the thoughts of those times when she and I took off for Fisher, Illinois, to visit with her mother and her brothers' wives (Joyce and Mary). If you really knew Betty, you know that she had a wonderful sense of humor which no one could match.

"Finally, I recall with fondness those evenings when all who were present would gather around the organ; Betty played and we joined voices in singing hymns of faith. I could write a book about my beloved sister-in-law, whom I miss very much.

"The link in the family chain that is missing will someday be back where it belongs when we all get to heaven to join her there. We had fun times. What I will always remember about her is this: She was a woman after God's own heart."



Dale and Joyce with baby

Betty with her sisters-in-law: Mary and Joyce

Joyce L. Keith, widow of Betty's brother, Dale Richard Keith

In loving tribute:

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.
(Psalm 107:8-9 NIV)

Family is one of the good things that the Lord gives us. I am an only child in my family, and Betty was the only daughter in hers. When we met, we were the sisters that neither of us had. From the moment we met, we laughed together, we cried together, and we shared many good things. Among these good things were raising our children—hers and mine—to be very close to each other. They spent many days and nights together having a good time. Another good thing that we enjoyed was food. Betty liked to eat (we all liked to eat). The two of us were fortunate to enjoy many happy times over food. I'm including one of her recipes:

Chicken Tetrazzini
4 c. cooked chicken breasts, bite sized
1 stick of margarine
1 (7 oz.) box elbow spaghetti
1 pint sour cream
3 tbsp. Parmesan cheese
2 cans—cream of chicken soup

Cook the chicken and cut into bite-sized pieces. Melt the margarine and pour it over the chicken. Cover for fifteen minutes. Cook the spaghetti and drain it. Assemble in casserole with chicken and then cover it with soup, sour cream, and two tablespoons of Parmesan cheese which have been well mixed. Bake one hour at 325 degrees and sprinkle with remaining tablespoon of Parmesan cheese and buttered bread crumbs which have been browned. This serves ten people.

Betty loved and appreciated her home. She was thankful for the opportunity to be a full-time wife and mother. She once told me that some days she just sat and thought about all the things for which she had to be thankful.

I am a quilter and I love this little saying (author unknown) that expresses my feelings about our family:

Families are like quilts ...
separate lives pieced together,
stitched with laughter and tears,
colored with shared memories,
bound by love and cherished more
with each passing year.

I once read a quote that said, "When your spirit is in something that you truly love, it is natural." Betty was a

natural when it came to loving her family and friends, caring for those in need, and serving her Lord by her everyday witness.

She was my sister and my friend!

Don, Mary, and girls

In Grandma Keith's kitchen: Joyce and Mary

Mary Keith Stocks, the widow of
Betty's brother, Donald Eugene Keith

In loving tribute to my
sister in-law, Betty Jean Keith:

It is, indeed, amazing how family members meet and then—together—journey through life. It occurred to me that Betty was the first member of the Keith family whom I met. She and Clark were next door neighbors of my sister Roberta and her husband. Being from Kansas, on one occasion I was visiting my married sister who lived in the small village of Fisher, Illinois. A stranger was easily noticed. Betty's brother Don noticed me at the gas pump as I filled the tank of the car belonging to my sister and brother in-law.

Don asked someone at the gas station, "Who is the girl driving Ingold's car?" Later that afternoon, he phoned the Ingold residence and asked to speak with me; while we were talking he asked if he could stop by the house and take me out for a coke. I asked my sister, "Who is Don Keith?" Roberta assured me that it was alright for me to accept Don's invitation because he was Betty's brother.

Admittedly, our courtship was short, but much of the time was spent with Betty and Clark. I loved every minute that I was with Betty, who was deeply devoted to her family and supportive of Clark as they, together, entered full-time Christian service.

Even though I had three sisters, I always felt very close to Betty. She was more to me than just a sister-in-law. When Don and I were expecting our first child, Betty was the first person with whom we shared the news.

When Don was diagnosed with a brain tumor, Betty made many trips back to Illinois to be supportive and by her presence to indicate her unfaltering love for her younger brother. She knew that Don and I had daily devotions following breakfast, and before she headed for home, she wanted to share in those devotions with us. If she couldn't be in Illinois with us, she called each day to check in. Toward the end of Don's struggle, Betty came down with shingles, but that didn't deter her from making the trip to Illinois.

Betty was very supportive when I informed her that I was going to remarry. She (and Clark) opened their hearts and arms to Len and were present for the wedding, which took place in the chapel of our Lutheran Church.

Our family is a circle of strength and love; with every union and with every birth the circle grows. Every joy shared adds more love; every crisis faced together makes the circle stronger.

I remember toward the end of her life, I received a call from my niece, informing us that her mother's condition had taken a turn for the worse and that Betty was in hospice. Len and I had the car packed and we were heading for Texas to attend a family wedding. That night prior to our planned departure, we didn't sleep well. The next morning, we unpacked wedding clothes and headed for

New Castle, Indiana. I spent the next two nights on the couch and Clark was situated in a recliner by Betty's hospital bed so that we could respond if she needed anything.

Memories of being with her at that time and what we experienced in those days so close to her passing are memories that I will always cherish. She knew that Len and I were there with her and Clark; she was strong in her faith even though her body was very weak. Throughout her life and in her waning hours, she was aware of the promises of God and anticipated one day hearing the Lord say, "Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you . . ." Betty looked forward to something better than anything that we know on this side of the grave.

Both Len and I are grateful that we were there to help in whatever way we could. I loved Betty as a sister, and I will always miss her.

A Parishioner Remembers Betty

"It was July 1977, that I first met our new pastor's wife, Betty Jean Hobby. I felt she was going to be a wonderful friend. After knowing her a little longer, I found her to be down to earth. She was a good listener and only offered advice when she was asked. Betty had a real sense of humor.

"When the Hobbys answered a call to Auburn, Indiana, we felt a void for Pastor and Betty; however, we were always welcomed to their new home and felt as though time and their move had not changed our relationship. Betty was the same hospitable hostess in her new home, preparing meals to welcome new members, the same as when they were in New Castle. Betty was so easy to talk with; she could be serious at times, but her sense of humor was always there.

"After the Hobbys moved back to New Castle, it was as though they hadn't been gone for those ten years. Betty was still the loving, caring soul mate for Pastor, helping him in taking care of his flock and their loving family. I always felt Betty was a good role model as a minister's wife. When the need arose, I always enjoyed having her play the piano for our worship services. That was something she did very

well, too! It surely was not always easy for Betty keeping their home in order and supporting Pastor's busy schedule.

"I will always miss Betty Hobby, but I am thankful to God that she was such an important part of our lives. Whenever I think of her, I can't help smiling because she made one feel so very special. I know that I will always feel her spirit because she was spirited—she was one who gave spiritual buoyancy to my life. This I must say, Betty Jean, you were special and I loved you!"

Breakfast Conversations

From the time of our first meeting, I felt a close kinship to Dr. Lindsey Rolston, a gifted, young orthopedic surgeon. In fact, the very first time we met, I commented that he was, "Happy enough to be a Lutheran." His response was, "I am a Lutheran." I could sense in him a deep and genuine compassion for people. I was eager for Betty to get acquainted with him. When he was in our home, he always brought with him an aura of joy and optimism. He became a special friend. Quickly, my entire family grew to embrace him as "one of us." He and his family became like family to us.

As time passed, on a number of occasions, Betty and I vacationed at his Florida residence. It was in that location where I wrote one of my books and began another. Betty and I were delighted to be guests at his wedding, at which I was honored to officiate. Toward the end of her life, one of Betty's goals was to go once more to Lindsey's place in Florida, a goal which sadly went unrealized.

After Betty's initial surgery, late in the day, Dr. Rolston stopped by her room—as one who genuinely cared—to see how she was doing. A year later, after the aborted surgery at the Indiana University Medical Center, he was one of the first whom I contacted, informing him

that surgery was out of the question; both he and I knew what that meant. Six months later, during Betty's last hospital stay, which took place the week prior to her passing, even with his very busy schedule, he took the time to look in on her, reassuring us of his deep concern. His visits brightened her day.

Dr. Rolston served as an usher at Betty's Memorial Service. Before leaving after that evening service, he told me that he wanted to have breakfast with me on Friday mornings. For over three years, breakfast with Lindsey has been a weekly ritual. It has been extremely helpful to me in working through the grief process.

When I think of blessings, Lindsey is one who comes to mind. I thank God for him and for his family. I am deeply grateful for our breakfast conversations. Many of them took place during a time when he was involved with the myriad details related to securing governmental approval of his knee replacement procedure/mechanism (the name of which is "Journey Deuce").

That Dr. Rolston would set aside time each Friday for me to have breakfast with him, as I journeyed through grief, is something I will never forget and which I shall always treasure.

Sunshine á la Carte

It came to me as a surprise. It was on the second anniversary of Betty's passing that I received a large print (32" X 32") of a very special painting: it is copy number three of twenty-five, and it was painted by Charles Bofinger, a graphic artist in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, area. Charlie is a dear friend of the Hobby family. He designed and did the art work for the cover of my earlier book, *The Homeboy*. Charlie is a distinguished alumnus of the Milton Hershey School, and a number of his works adorn my residence's walls.

This precious gift will become a family heirloom. The painting is of an old wooden cart filled with luscious red and white flowers illuminated by the morning sunlight. It is a perpetual reminder of the thoughtfulness of the artist and a marvelous tribute to my beloved Betty. This exceptional creation of Charlie's will be seen, and it will be an inspiration to all who visit in my home. In all of its splendor and grandeur, it graces the north wall of my great room. That one of the exclusive twenty-five copies of this painting was given to me in memory of my beloved wife adds to its value for the entire Hobby family. Thanks to Charles Bofinger, my friend and Milton Hershey School brother, for

his gracious gift which beautifully honors Betty's memory. It's a painting which bears the interesting title, "Sunshine á la Carte."

A Unique Tribute

Six months after Betty's death, Coach Steve Bennett, a dear friend and an outstanding basketball coach, presented me with a basketball which had been used (the game ball) at a high school game the week Betty had passed away. The ball was inscribed, "In Memory of Betty Hobby," and signed by Coach Bennett, his staff, and all of the players. We were so deeply touched by this beautiful tribute to a great Trojan fan, son Ron purchased a plexi-glass cube so that in a special place in our home we could proudly display the basketball. The "Memorial Basketball" was a gesture of love that will perpetually remind us of a thoughtful coach, who with his staff and boys' basketball team, expressed their condolences in this unique way, as they honored a great (lady) fan. Coach's friendship has been and continues to be a relationship that I highly value.

Celebrating 50 years of marriage

13.
The Pain Lingers

Reflections From My Journal

August 2004

Where does the time go? I have been on the go and it seems that time just passes me by! Today is the six-month anniversary of Betty's passing. In retrospect it seems like six years since that painful evening (Ash Wednesday) when my dear lady slipped through the valley of the shadow of death.

I miss Betty more than I thought possible. Over the years of my ministry, I thought that I knew what folks were experiencing when losing a mate; however, I've come to the conclusion that you can't really know the pain and depth of loss until there is that firsthand experience.

My faith consoles me. I profoundly believe that Betty is in a better place—better than anything that we know on this side of the grave. I am convinced that she has gone on to inherit that which our Lord has prepared for those who live and die in faith. That I truly believe. But the reality with which I live is this: I miss Betty very much.

She was definitely a special lady. My fervent hope is that I was able to successfully communicate through the years how genuinely blessed I was to have her as my wife. The Lord knows—and so do I—that she was a faithful wife, a devoted mother, and a caring grandmother and great-grandmother. Through the children whom she brought into this world, she left a fantastic and an enduring legacy.

Every day I retreat into my heart's private room that the two of us built, and there I brood and weep, knowing that there are so many things I wish that I would have shared with her. So many things were left unsaid. Perhaps I didn't need to say them. Rather than words, possibly the embraces and those little things that I did for her may have powerfully communicated my inner feelings. When I wipe the tears from my eyes, it seems clear to me that Betty wouldn't want me to spend too much time brooding.

Among her enviable traits was courage. I admired how she courageously and valiantly engaged in her battle with that awful disease. A comment that she made on many occasions was, "How could one possibly cope with this (cancer) if it were not for faith and family?" I recognized in her a strength that I envied and from which I drew strength, as I witnessed her do battle with cancer over a period of eighteen months.

I will never forget those occasions when she was seated on the examining table, and the oncologist reported the results of a recent test. It seemed to always be bad news! I could see the tears welling up within her eyes and we hugged, clinging to each other. What could I say to her? I knew what to say in similar circumstances, but this was my

wife, my beloved. Even though I managed to say something, I am confident that my presence with her, holding her affectionately, was the best means of support at the moment.

Never will I forget the look in her eyes as they met mine. Quietly she would say, "Tonight we weep, but tomorrow we will move on with God's help."

I wanted to shout at the top of my lungs, "Why, God, why does she have to endure this?" But I knew if I were to be helpful, I must let her do the talking, and I needed to do some praying.

The chemotherapy sessions were awful. They lasted about five hours. I sat beside her through every hour of those months of therapy; I missed only one session and that was because I had an out-of-town doctor's appointment. My daughter sat in for me. The nurses did a great job of being cheerful, helping Betty through what is a horrific experience.

Admittedly, throughout the whole ordeal, I was in a state of denial. I was certain that Betty would triumph over this lethal disease, which literally "eats away at the host." I refused to accept the fact that my "Sweetie" was going to succumb; I resisted the thought until the day our doctor informed us that it was time for hospice.

I realize that one must pick up and move on. There is really no other option, but it is easier said than done. The past is jam-packed with precious memories, to which I feel tempted to cling. However, I know that one can't live in the past. Each new day brings with it current challenges and the day must be faced with confidence and gratitude. As we are so often reminded, "While the past cannot be lived in, its

experiences can certainly provide a basis on which to build for today and the days that stretch ahead."

Back on that August day in 1949, when we stood before the altar of God, we committed ourselves to one another. It was quite clear to us that ahead of us—how far ahead we did not know—there would be death's separation. In fact, as part of the wedding vows we promised, ". . . until death parts us." Through the years, I lived with the false assumption that Betty would long outlive me. This belief was predicated on the fact that every nursing home in which I made pastoral visits and every elderly group to which I have spoken had populations that were disproportionately women.

To think about Betty is something I cannot do without also thinking about the phenomenal children whom she brought into this world. As a mother, she was extremely attentive to their needs. In relating to the children, she was firm but loving. When she said, "No," they knew it didn't mean maybe! Her life was her family. Betty helped to instill in our children the quality of loyalty. Her legacy lives on through them. With my children, I will do everything within my power to honor Betty Hobby by praising and thanking God for the many years with which we were blessed.

Six months ago my family lost its matriarch. The pain lingers. The memories of that evening when she left us are fresh, and our commitment is firm: Betty Jean Hobby, never will we forget you! Without you, life will never again be as happy and vibrant as it was when you were with us. We pray that in your heavenly home you will know how deeply we loved you and how much you are missed.

More Reflections

"We have more occasion for joy than sadness. The reason is that we believe in the living God. Because Christ lives, we shall live also."
- Martin Luther

Notes from my Journal
December 10, 2004

Each person deals with grief differently. I had no intention of writing about my feelings in those months following Betty's death. My feelings were difficult to handle. I had been raised in an orphanage, with little family contact. After leaving the security of "The Home," I enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps (which later became the U.S. Air Force). Sixteen or seventeen months later I met Betty, who became my wife; for 54½ years, we lived inseparably as husband and wife. Suddenly to have her gone was extremely difficult for me to handle. I was lost! I floundered. From day to day I brooded, until one day I discovered that putting my thoughts on paper was helpful. Below is one recording from my journal.

This past week has been a tough one for me to get through. It seems that the closer we get to Christmas, the more difficult it becomes for me. Granted, I have not been getting the usual amount of sleep—even now it is 3 a.m. I slept for a few hours in the recliner, and then I attempted to transition to my bed. However, getting sleep seemed out of the question, so I decided that I would go to my home study and record some of my thoughts in my journal.

Recently, I've not been getting the exercise which had been part of my regimen. I tend to watch too much television; I wonder if television watching is an escape mechanism for me? At times I feel lonely and my heart aches. At times I have what some may refer to as panic attacks. Will this ever subside? The tears flow and they flow easily. I am told that this is to be expected and that it is a normal reaction for one who is working through grief.

Someone once said, "When your eyes leak tears, it keeps your heart from swelling." I feel so helpless at times. I hesitate to say too much to my children about the depth of my grief, because I know that they need me to be strong for them. After all, I am a "man of faith." I must continue to remind myself that though our loss was/is enormous, Betty's gain is eternal!

I should take comfort in knowing that Betty is now at peace. Her pain and anguish are past. She has gone on to that place which our God has prepared for those who love Him. Knowing this, why do I keep tormenting myself? Yet, I miss her more and more. She was such a wonderful

dynamic in my life. Everything was about us, and now it is just about me—what a frightening thought.

Yesterday my colleague in ministry, Bishop Emeritus Ralph Kempski, called to let me know that he and his wife Mary have me in their thoughts and prayers at this holy season. On Christmas Day for the past two years, Ralph called to check on Betty—something that both Betty and I deeply appreciated. Christmas cards are flowing in; there are many thoughtful folks who are being supportive, and I haven't even had the heart to put together a Christmas letter—something that I've done over the years. I did string lights and put greenery up around the fireplace mantle.

As I did this decorating, I thought of last year and how Betty, lying on the couch in the family room, coached me. "Oh, Clark, that looks nice." After I made some adjustment, she added, "That's even nicer." She was fond of our home and especially enjoyed decorating it for the various seasonal events. When we were looking at houses, with purchase in mind, Betty knew the moment that we entered this house on Jeffrey that "it was the one." I was impressed with the house, but I wanted more time to ponder a decision regarding it. She urged, "Write a check and let's put an offer on it, please!" (In two days it was to go on the market. Later we learned that we appeared on the scene and made an offer just in the nick of time.)

When the phone call came informing us that our offer was accepted, Betty was elated. I knew then, that we had made the right decision. It was a home that the two of us

enjoyed for eleven years. Now it has lost its luster. It seems so empty without her.

As I look around our home, I am reminded that the last item of furniture which we purchased together was an entertainment center for the family room. We visited a number of businesses before finally finding exactly what we wanted. At the time her energy level was extremely low, and I knew that she was terribly weak. However, one evening when we were, "on the hunt," there was one more place that she had in mind. Fortunately, it was there that we located exactly that for which we were searching. I will always be grateful that Betty had input in the selection. Earlier in the evening we had been to several places—but to no avail. Betty said to me, "There's one more place that might have the entertainment center, but you probably want to go home, don't you?"

Thank God, I said, "Sweetie, if you are up to it, let's give it a try." I knew that she was experiencing discomfort, but she pressed on, demonstrating a tenacity that even cancer was unable to thwart. Betty was not one to easily give up. Throughout her life, she displayed courage in the face of great odds. To her husband, her children, and friends she was a tremendous inspiration.

God works in mysterious ways. If my Air Force buddy had not invited me to accompany him to his choir rehearsal, at the Rantoul (Illinois) Lutheran Church, I would never have met that young lady whom I quickly married—much to the dismay of her mother. Yes, at the time we were both very young, but there was a maturity which I

recognized—and envied—in Betty. She became a stabilizing factor in my life.

I was fresh out of the orphanage, and into the Air Force only a couple of years, when I was blessed to meet Betty. I was certain that she would be an ideal wife and a terrific mother. She was not only a faithful wife but also a devoted mother and a doting grandmother. Faith and family were the focus of her life.

More than ever, I realize what a truly gifted person that she was. My life was enriched and enlarged because I was privileged to have Betty at my side for over half a century. She taught me a lot of life's lessons. She was a tremendous source of strength for me. No matter what the situation, Betty was right there with concern and love.

Conversely, I was there for her when health issues surfaced. It was the natural thing to do. We were so different in so many ways, and maybe that is why we were able to succeed in marriage. We didn't always agree but were always free to share our feelings with each other. We did our best to talk things through; she knew that I was a "softy" and I knew that, given some time, she would usually come around to my way of thinking. Betty had an uncanny insight into the nature of people. She approached issues from a pragmatic point of view which I often found extremely helpful.

This past Christmas Eve, I was scheduled to assist at the communion service at Holy Trinity Lutheran—our home congregation. That morning, I called our pastor and told him that I wouldn't be able to leave my wife on this

holy occasion. He understood. Neither of us had any idea that it would be the last Christmas Eve that Betty would spend with me on this earth.

That evening Betty and I watched a service on television which originated from the state of Oregon. The closing hymn was, "Joy to the World." I immediately recognized the arrangement. It was a precious gift from heaven for Betty and me to see the rolling credits on the screen, one of which was "Joy To The World, arranged by Robert Andrew Hobby."

It is now 5 a .m., time for me to cease reflecting and get some rest. For two months now, I have had a companion in the house. Her name is Angel, and she is a Boston Terrier. Angel was born on my birthday, and I purchased her on the eight-month anniversary of Betty's death. Our children thought it might help me to have a dog around the house. They were right.

Usually at 5 a.m. I take Angel outside, after which we spend a couple of hours in the recliner together. She loves to play and she very much enjoys cuddling. A dog is described as being man's best friend. I am quickly embracing that thought. For 54½ years, I was privileged to live with an angel; now, I have my little companion whom I call Angel. She has become an important part of my life. She has been a great help in my adjustment to life without Betty.

(These are random thoughts that ran through my mind fifteen days prior to my first Christmas without Betty and which were recorded in my journal.)

14.
Epilogue

A Stained-Glass Window

At the time of Betty's death and in the months that followed, many cards, notes, and phone calls arrived expressing condolences to me and to each member of the family. As a family, we had requested that memorial gifts be made to our church. After a year had passed, it was our decision to use what had been received as a "starter" to fund the cost of a large chancel stained-glass window. Each of the children and their spouses gave a substantial gift to the memorial fund, and I contributed the remainder of the cost of the window. Involved in the window were such things as, the window design and the design for a special state-of-the-art lighting which is behind the window. Also, we had the cost of both wiring and the light fixtures. Additionally, there was cost related to the window's massive oak frame and base.

Fortunately, we were blessed to have the artisanship of Don Beck, Ron Kaufman, and their helpers (members

of the parish) who generously gave of their time so that the memorial window could become a reality. While it is in the statement used for the dedication of the window, I want to reiterate that in consultation with me and my family, Diana Moncrief provided the design and with her artistic expertise supervised the entire window project. It seemed so fitting that these individuals were greatly involved with the project because Diana, Don, and Ron had a special place in Betty's heart.

The window is beautiful in design. It is an object of superior workmanship. Its stained glass and oak wood blend dignity, beauty, and strength into the memorial window's appearance.

It was on the Sunday following Christmas—December 31, 2007—that the Hobby family presented the memorial window to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church of New Castle, Indiana, to be dedicated to the glory of the Triune God, in memory of a devoted Shepherdess, Betty Jean Keith Hobby.

Words of Presentation

"Pastor Gramza, on behalf of the Hobby family, I present the beautiful stained-glass memorial window—which embellishes this worship space—to be dedicated to the glory of the Triune God, honoring the memory of a devoted shepherdess, Betty Jean Keith Hobby. Scripture enjoins us to, 'Give to the Lord the glory due unto His name and to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness' (Psalm 96:8&9 KJV).

"The Hobby family wishes to acknowledge with gratitude to God the expert direction given to the design and supervision of the window project by Diana Moncrief. Also, with commensurate gratitude and thanksgiving, we praise God for the artisanship of Don Beck and Ron Kaufman and helpers with regard to the wood frame and base which blend dignity, beauty, and strength to the memorial window's appearance" (by The Rev. Dr. Clark E. Hobby).

A magnificent memorial to a dedicated pastor's wife

By SANDY MOORE
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The congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church of New Castle recently dedicated a intricately designed stained-glass window in memory of Betty Jean Hobby, who passed away Feb. 25, 2004.

The window was presented to the church congregation Sunday by the Hobby family including Dr. Clark Hobby, Pastor Emeritus of the church, and the couple's four children: Janet Perry, Ronald Hobby, Linda Huntley and Robert Hobby.

Betty Jean and Dr. Clark Hobby were married 54½ years and they pastored the congregation in New Castle for 14 of those years.

The brightly-colored window crafted from red, gold, green and lavender glass adorns the wall behind the circular rostrum area. The window is framed with hand-crafted oak which blends the wood with the original oak of the sanctuary.

Don Beck and Ron Caufman were the artisans who supervised the construction of the oak frames and the storage cabinets at the bottom.

The congregation formed a committee to design the actual window, according to Diana Moncrieff who chaired the project. Moncrieff is an artist who compiled the desires of the committee on paper after it had taken suggestions for the congregation. The committee delivered a PowerPoint presentation to the church when they had the design complete.

The design was fashioned to coordinate with the original windows and the window glass for the new window was chosen to match the windows which line the sanctuary.

A cross with the Trinity Center in the middle of the cross, which depicts the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is lighted by a fluorescent backlight on a dimmer switch to give just the right lighting affect for each occasion. Moss Stained Glass of Anderson perfected the final design.

"I am writing a book about Betty," said Dr. Hobby, which will be his fourth book published. "It is called 'The Shepardess.' Betty was the model of a pastor's wife. She was like Andrew of the Bible. He introduced people to Jesus. Peter took the limelight, but Andrew stayed in the wings. That was Betty, she was always there to help."

Jeff Gramza, current pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, said that Betty was "the greatest wife and mother — first and foremost."

"She was a strong wife to Pastor Hobby and a great example of being a Christian mother," he said.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church is located at 535 S. 14th St. Services are Sunday school 9 a.m. and worship 10:30 a.m.

(A photo is on the back cover.)

Dr. Clark Hobby and Rev. Jeff Gramza stand before
the new stained glass window donated to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
in memory of Betty Jean Hobby.